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SELECT

ICELANDIC POETRY,

TRANSLATED

FROM THE ORIGINALS;

WITH NOTES.

PART FIRST.

Wm. by Herbert

——Opifex numeris veterum primordia vocum
Atque marem strepitum fidis intendisse.

PERSIUS.

London:

PRINTED FOR T. REYNOLDS, OXFORD-STREET;
BY I. GOLD, SHOE LANE.

1804.

By Wm. B. Herbert

TO

THE HONORABLE C. ANKER,

OF

COPENHAGEN,

&c. &c.

THE following translations from the old tongue of his native country (which, as it is intimately allied to England in ancient blood and language, should ever continue joined to it by the closest ties of uninterrupted amity) are inscribed, as a trifling testimony of the sincerest esteem and friendship, by his faithful humble servant,

WILLIAM HERBERT.

December, 1803.

TIL HER ANKER.

Forlader mig, o Muser, om jeg her
Opvække tör den Danske lires sang
Först i et fremmet land! Vel kiender jeg
Min svaghed til at synge Danmarks roes
I Danmarks skiönne sprog! Vejleder da
Hendes indvaanere med hellig trin,
Hvor svæver den udödelige aand
Af gammel digtekunst fra Grækenland
Og den almægtige Latinske bred!
Ophöjer dem, og fylder deres bryst
Med reenhed og indbildnings-kraftens magt,
At de maa snart den ærekrone faae,

Som deres sprog fortiener! Mig er nok,
At jeg fra Island og fra Norges kyst
Kan friske krandse bringe til min ven,
Og blomstre plukkede ved Engelsk haand.
Hvor gierne vilde jeg, hvor hierteglad,
Med dig, min ven, i Norges elskte land
Klavre ad skov-bevoxne klipper op
Liig indtil Kiölens spids, og Norlands kyst,
Haloges ældste bolig! O hvor fri,
O hvor fortryllet skulde jeg omkring
Der fölge vildtets spor! og mödig, (da
Sin hede middags solen styrter ned)
Udstrakt nær ved en höj balstyrig fos,
Udi den granne-skyggers mörke nat,
Rose den pragt af en almægtig haand;
Som, mellem snee og tordenskyers skræk,
Det usle hiem af et frimodigt folk

Med glæde har fornöjet! Ædle land!
Hvori hver egn erindrer vigtig strid
Af gamle helte, eller rune-steen,
Som sönnens pligt ei uden heltesang
Lod reise til sin döde faders roes
I fordum tid, da Odins höje navn
Indblæste deres bryst ærgierrig magt,
Og det i kamp uböjelige sind.

VILHELM HERBERT.

ADVERTISEMENT.

If this attempt should be fortunate enough to meet with the approbation of the public, it is my intention to complete a second part with an introductory account of the ancient history and literature of Iceland. The volumes, which have been printed in the Icelandic language, are numerous, though many of them are become very rare; and a great number of old manuscripts remain yet unpublished. The following poems are closely translated, and unadorned; with a few exceptions they are rendered line for line; and (I believe) as literally, as the difference of language and metrical rules would permit. For me the energetic harmony of these old poems has great charms: the most ancient are the simplest and most beautiful; for the Icelandic poetry degenerated into affectation of impenetrable obscurity and extravagant metaphors. I

conceive, that much of the value of these relicks consists in their peculiarities, and in the light, they throw on the singular manners and persuasions of the northern nations; which would be destroyed by any attempt to embellish them. The only merit, I have aimed at, is that of accuracy; if I have judged wrong, I can only say in my defence, that it would have been much easier to adorn them, than to copy faithfully.

"Quest' anima———
Gran parte tien di sua possanza avvinta,
Nè può sempre spiegar libere l'ali
Presso i voli immortali."

The original verses have no final rhymes, but regular alliterations and corresponding syllables. Such was the old metre of the north; and, when rhymes were adopted, the rules of alliteration were still preserved: as in the ransom of Egill Skallagrimson;

Lof at viisa vann,
Vyst mære eg dann;
Hliods bidium hann,
Thuiat hrodur offann.

i. e. Laudem cantilena perfecit, certè carmine laudo illum; silentium rogamus eum, nam carmen de eo excogitavi. *Worm. Lit. Run.* 208.

And in the Rimur af Karl og Grym;

Grymur kiemur a Gautalad,
Giefast mun vargi nokr brad.
Nord. Kämp. Datt.

In the proper names I have sometimes thrown aside, and sometimes retained the final *ur*, which is changed into *s* in the genitive case; Grymur or Grym, as we say Pompeius or Pompey.

The ancient language of the north is at present known by the name of Icelandic, because its use is confined to that island; though it once extended over a large part of Europe, and is the parent of the Swedish, the Danish, and many words in the English. Most of the old northern writings were composed by natives of Iceland, which was once as high in the estimation of Europe, as it is now insignificant. "Iceland," (as a Danish* writer has observed) "the largest island in Europe after Great Britain, but the least serviceable in proportion to its size, was formerly celebrated, not

* Malling, Store og gode handlinger, p. 411.

only for the warlike disposition of its people, but also for its excellant grass and fertile pastures, and for many other natural and well used advantages. Iceland was at that time populous, flourishing, strong, and respectable; but various circumstances, both severally and by their combined effects, occasioned its gradual decline. Inundations, crumbling of mountains, and subterraneous fires, have by degrees deteriorated many parts of the country; the eruptions of Hecla, Kötlugia, and other volcanos, destroyed whole districts; so that the surface of the earth in many places was completely altered, and beautiful meadows changed into naked tracts of sand. The want of arts, manufactures, and good municipal regulations, rendered the natives incapable of redeeming the lands, which were once laid waste, or properly cultivating those, which remained uninjured: trade in their own vessels was abandoned; the land was farmed out to foreign merchants, who naturally regarded only their private interests; the people became oppressed, spiritless, and

inactive; and this was an additional cause of alteration in the state of Iceland." To these circumstances should be added the great accumulation of ice in the polar regions, which has wrought a considerable change in Greenland and North America since their first discovery by the Icelandic navigators in the tenth century, and has materially affected all the northern parts of Europe. This is a curious and interesting subject, which deserves more accurate investigation, than it has yet obtained; but it does not lie within the limits of my present undertaking.

December 1803.

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ERRATA.

P. 6. and 7. *for* meed *read* mead
— 13. l. 14. *for* own daughter. *read* daughter by Frigga.
— 21. — 5. *for* established *read* established themselves
— 25. — 8. *for* hoard *read* horde
— 34. — 2. *for* also *read* also called
— 60. — 1. *after* surpassed *insert* a comma
— 64. — 3. *dele* finally
— 112. — 59. *for* Hither he wends, *read* He comes, the prince,

NOTE OMITTED.

Song of Thrym, *v.* 14. It is remarkable, that silver is here mentioned, as preferable to gold, and I believe intentionally; for gold is frequently spoken of by the old Icelandic poets, and silver very rarely. Suhm (*Hist. af Danm.* I. 119) observes, that many utensils of gold have been dug out of the earth in the northern countries, but very few of silver.

THE

SONG

OF

THRYM;

OR,

THE RECOVERY OF THE HAMMER.

From the old Icelandic in Sæmund's Edda.

1803.

WRATH waxed Thor, when his sleep was flown,
And he found his trusty hammer gone;
He smote his brow, his beard he shook,
The son of earth gan round him look;
And this the first word, that he spoke;
"Now listen what I tell thee, Loke;
Which neither on earth below is known,
Nor in Heaven above; my hammer's gone."

Their way to Freyia's bower they took,
And this the first word, that he spoke;
"Thou, Freyia, must lend a winged robe,
To seek my hammer round the globe."

Freyia sung.

"That shouldst thou have, though 'twere of gold,
And that, though 'twere of silver, hold."
Away flew Loke; the wing'd robe sounds,
Ere he has left the Asgard grounds,
And ere he has reach'd the Jotunheim bounds.
High on a mound in haughty state
Thrym the king of the Thursi sate;
For his dogs he was twisting collars of gold,
And trimming the manes of his coursers bold.

Thrym sung.

"How fare the Asi? the Alfi how?
Why com'st thou alone to Jotunheim now?"

Loke sung.

"Ill fare the Asi; the Alfi mourn;
Thor's hammer from him thou hast torn."

Thrym sung.

"I have the Thundeyer's hammer bound,
Fathoms eight beneath the ground;
With it shall no one homeward tread,
Till he bring me Freyia to share my bed."
Away flew Loke; the wing'd robe sounds,
Ere he has left the Jotunheim bounds,
And ere he has reach'd the Asgard grounds.
At Midgard Thor met crafty Loke,
And this the first word, that he spoke;
"Have you your errand and labor done?
Tell from aloft the course, you run.
For * setting oft the story fails,
And lying oft the lie prevails."

Loke sung.

"My labor is past, mine errand I bring;
Thrym has thine hammer, the giant king:
With it shall no one homeward tread,
Till he bear him Freyia to share his bed."

* See the note on these lines.

Their way to lovely Freyia they took,
And this the first word, that he spoke;
" Now, Freyia, busk, as a blooming bride;
Together, we must, to Jotunheim ride."
Wrath waxed Freyia with ireful look;
All Asgard's hall with wonder shook;
Her great bright necklace started wide.
" Well may ye call me a wanton bride,
If I with ye to Jotunheim ride."
The Asi did all to council crowd,
The Asiniæ all talk'd fast and loud;
This they debated, and this they sought,
How the hammer of Thor should home be brought.
Up then and spoke Heimdallar free,
Like the Vani, wise was he;
" Now busk we Thor, as a bride so fair;
Let him that great bright necklace wear;
Round him let ring the spousal keys,
And a maiden kirtle hang to his knees,

Busk, dress. *Kirtle*, a woman's garment.

And on his bosom jewels rare;
And high and quaintly braid his hair."
Wrath waxed Thor with godlike pride;
" Well may the Asi me deride,
If I let me be dight, as a blooming bride."
Then up spoke Loke, Laufeyia's son;
" Now hush thee, Thor; this must be done:
The giants will strait in Asgard reign,
If thou thine hammer dost not regain."
Then busk'd they Thor, as a bride so fair,
And the great bright necklace gave him to wear;
Round him let ring the spousal keys,
And a maiden kirtle hang to his knees,
And on his bosom jewels rare;
And high and quaintly braided his hair.
Up then arose the crafty Loke,
Laufeyia's son, and thus he spoke;
" A servant I thy steps will tend,
Together we must to Jotunheim wend."

Dight, dressed, adorned.

Now home the goats together hie;
Yoked to the axle they swiftly fly.
The mountains shook, the earth burn'd red,
As Odin's son to Jotunheim sped.
Then Thrym the king of the Thursi said;
"Giants, stand up; let the seats be spread:
Bring Freyia Niorder's daughter down
To share my bed from Noatun.
With horns all gilt each coal-black beast
Is led to deck the giant's feast;
Large wealth and jewels have I stored;
I lack but Freyia to grace my board."
Betimes at evening they approach'd,
And the mantling ale the giants broach'd.
The spouse of Sifia ate alone
Eight salmons, and an ox full-grown,
And all the cates, on which women feed;
And drank three firkins of sparkling mead.
Then Thrym the king of the Thursi said;
"Where have ye beheld such a hungry maid?

Ne'er saw I bride so keenly feed,
Nor drink so deep of the sparkling mead."
Then forward lent the crafty Loke,
And thus the giant he bespoke;
"Nought has she eat for eight long nights,
So did she long for the nuptial rites."
He stoop'd beneath her veil to kiss,
But he started the length of the hall, I wiss.
"Why are the looks of Freyia so dire?
It seems, as her eyeballs glisten'd with fire."
Then forward lent the crafty Loke,
And thus the giant he bespoke;
"Nought has she slept for eight long nights,
So did she long for the nuptial rites."
Then in the giant's sister came,
Who dared a bridal gift to claim;
"Those rings of gold from thee I crave,
If thou wilt all my fondness have,
All my love and fondness have."

Then Thrym the king of the Thursi said;
"Bear in the hammer to plight the maid;
Upon her lap the bruizer lay,
And firmly plight our hands and fay."
The Thunderer's soul smiled in his breast,
When the hammer hard on his lap was placed;
Thrym first the king of the Thursi he slew,
And slaughter'd all the giant crew.
He slew that giant's sister old,
Who pray'd for bridal gifts so bold.
Instead of money and rings, I wot,
The hammers bruises were her lot.
Thus Odin's son his hammer got.

Fay, faith.

NOTES

ON

THE SONG OF THRYM.

The Edda of Sæmund is a collection of old Icelandic odes, some of which are supposed to have been written before the birth of Christ. It is said to have been compiled by the learned Sæmund, who was born in Iceland in 1056; according to some, 1054 or 1057. The name of Sæmund's Edda was affixed to the manuscript in the seventeenth century by Bryniolfus Svenonius, bishop of Skalholt. The prose Edda, attributed to Snorro Sturleson, is founded upon these poems.

Mr. Cottle has published, what he calls a translation of this ode, but it bears little resemblance to the original. Translations made, like Dr. Perey's, by a person unacquainted with the Icelandic language,

through the medium of a Latin prose version, cannot be expected to represent the style and spirit of the originals: but Mr. C. has not even taken the trouble of understanding the Latin; otherwise he never could have translated, Ex Noatunis, "Whom Noathuna calls her son;" or, Illicò gigantes Asgardum habitabunt, "Know the Asgardi sons shall reign:" or, what is more extraordinary, in the 22d stanza, Tunc profatus est Thrymus Thursorum dynastes,

"Thursori! dynasts of this sphere!"
(Thor began approaching near)

and in the 20th, Tunc profatus est Lokius Loveyiæ natus; "Abstine, Thore, istorum verborum."

"Care not for that, Loveyia's son!"
Lok in quick reply begun.

In the three last mentioned passages Mr. C. appears to have confounded the nominative with the accusative; which is not improbable, as he has given Thursori for the nominative of Thursorum. In the thirteenth stanza he has represented Freyia as consenting

to go instead of refusing, which destroys the sense of all, that follows.

V. 1. "*Thor.*" Thor was worshipped by the Norwegians, as the most powerful of the Gods. His favorite weapon was a hammer, which was shaped like a cross. The following passages are translated from Peringskiold's Uplandic monuments relative to a Runestone, on which this hammer is represented. "Johannes Magnus Goth. Sveon. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 9. pag. 30. och brodren Olaus Magni, lib. 3. cap. 3. pag. 100. afbilda Thor med en spira, &c." *i. e.* "Johannes Magnus, &c. and his brother Olaus, &c. represent Thor with a sceptre in his right hand, and twelve stars round his head. Others give Thor also a cruciform thunderbolt in his left hand, and seven stars over his head. Thor's hammer is described in the Eddas with the additional name of miolner; viz. in Sturleson's, &c. it may be seen, that Thor the son of Odin amongst his chattels possessed the hammer miolner, which the Rimthussi and mountain

sorcerers knew to their cost. When Thor dressed himself, he took the hammer miolner, lifted up and brandished it. Thor struck the hammer against the head of the giant Skrymner; another time Thor threw the hammer after Yme the sorcerer, and broke his head, &c."

"The mark of the hammer with its handle upon the Runestone at Roby is seven spans, as the length of a moderate sceptre requires. The ancient inhabitants of this country did not use a sceptre with lilies, but with a cross upon it, or like the trident of Neptune. The shape of Thor's hammer in the time of paganism was exactly a cross; for when king Hacon sacrificed with the Heathens in Norway, and was forced to drink out of the offering cup, he made the Christian sign of the cross before his mouth; but this was interpreted by his heathen subjects, as if he had made the sign of Thor's hammer before his mouth, and so made the holy libation to the God Thor. The king's governors and ministers had formerly permis-

sion to use the representation of Thor's hammer or a cross, to shew the might and power entrusted to them. In former times, when the people were convened by the king to the public assembly and court of judicature, the hammer of Thor was used amongst the Heathens for sign and summons; but, when they became Christians, a cross of wood was adopted in its stead, which was sent round the villages. See Angr. Jon. lib. 1. Rerum Island. c. 7. and Stephan. in Sax. Gram. p. 250." *Peringskiold's Uplandic Monuments. Stockh.* 1710. *pag.* 255.

Thor is stated in the Edda *(Göranson's edition, p.* 22.) to have been the son of Odin and Jorth, the earth, who was his own daughter.

V. 4. "*The son of earth.*" Jardar bur, one of Thor's appellations.

V. 6. "*Loke.*" The son of Laufey or Laufeyia, was one of the Asi.

V. 9. "*Freyia.*" The daughter of Niorder of the nation of the Vani. "Tha er Niördur var meth Vö-

nom, &c." *i. e.* "Whilst Niorder was amongst the Vani, he had espoused his sister; for that was according to their law. Frey and Freyia were their children. But amongst the Asi it was forbidden to marry such near relations." *Ynglinga Saga*, c. 4.

V. 16. "*Asgard.*" As-gard means the abode of the Asi, who were the countrymen of Odin. Suhm in his Historie af Danmark (v. 1. p. 17.) considers, that there were three Odins. The first, son of Bör of the nation of the Asi, who dwelt in the old Asgard at the mouth of the Tanais, introduced the worship of the Sun, and after his death was deified by his countrymen. The second, son of Heremod, a descendant of the old Odin, fled before Darius at the time of his expedition against the Scythians, built the new Asgard near the Duna, and inhabited the country between that river and the Veissel. From thence he passed over into Sweden, and waged war against all the Jotuns, who would not acknowledge him to be their God and the offspring of the Sun. Lastly came the third

Odin, son of Fridleif, from old Asgard about 50 years before the birth of Christ, stopped some time at the new Asgard, and from thence proceded to Sweden, where he dwelt at Sigtuna, and built a temple at Upsala, which became his principal residence. It is the opinion of some writers, that Upsala itself is sometimes called Asgard; and it seems very probable, that this name was applied to the metropolis of the Asi, in whatever country they sojourned. In his observations on Saxo Grammaticus, which are printed in the eleventh volume of his Samlede skrifter, Suhm is contented with two Odins. The following passage, which gives a very plausible solution of some of the difficulties, that occur in the Northern mythology, is translated from thence. "It was not difficult for Odin to make the progress, which he did in the North; for he gave out, that he and his companions were the very Gods, who were already worshipped there. For this must be observed, that I reckon more, than one Odin. Saxo himself speaks in this place of a Mit-Odin, that

a middle Odin, from which we may conclude, that he believed, there were three. But I hold, that not more than two are necessary. The first inhabitants of the North came undoubtedly out of Asia, from the countries situated between the Black Sea and the Caspian. That is the reason, that the name Aser is found in our old histories, and the last Odin improperly took the name of As. Whether some men, called Odin, Thor, and so forth, were amongst the first, I shall not attempt to say; but thus much is certain, that by Thor was understood the supreme Deity; and by Odin the Sun. The last Odin, whether he bore that name before, or adopted it after his arrival, sometimes gave himself out to be the Deity Odin, and, as he was the most eminent of his party, sometimes also to be the first and supreme God. Perhaps at the commencement he met with people, who were acquainted with the God Odin only; for otherwise it would have been as easy for him to have called himself Thor; but, when he had once established himself as Odin, it was necessary to adhere

to that. Hence sprung the diversity of notions in our mythology: for Odin induced some to believe, that he was the supreme God; some on the contrary could not be brought to this, but, as his exploits were great in war, they conceived, that he was the God of battle, which others thought to be either Thor, or Tyr. But some held him in such abhorrence, that they considered him as a God indeed, (for they had felt his might too much to deny this) but as a wicked God; and they reckoned, that he was the evil, and Thor on the other hand the good being. The seat of Thor was principally in Norway, where it does not seem, that the arms of Odin made great progress. The true seat of Odin was in Sweden. Before his time, according to my opinion, the great northern peninsula and its inhabitants had no special name amongst the natives themselves, excepting, that the northern division was called Nor-riget, or the north kingdom, and the southern Syd-riget, or the south kingdom; from which the names Norvegia, Norvegi, Normanni, Suionia, Suiones, are

derived; whence Norige, corruptly Nerigon, is found in Pliny, and Suiones in Tacitus. The large and tall people are called in our language Riser, from which perhaps the Russians acquired their name; Jetter, which according to different pronunciations was changed to Jyder, Gauter, Geater, and Gother; (by which last name a German nation near the Baltic, introduced by the last Odin, was particularly called in ancient times) and Kiæmper, which the Romans changed into Cimbri, or Kimbri. It is certain, that our old history and mythology has been very much perplexed by confounding the elder Odin and Thor with the later." *Suhms samlede skrifter*, 11. 146.

I have subjoined an extract from the old Icelandic Rymbegla, in which Odin is called the son of Thor. It is not singular, that so much diversity should appear in the accounts of Odin's parents, as there were evidently more, than one Odin, and the object of the last was to conceal the whole of his real history. "Upphaf allra frásagna í Norrænne tungu theirra," &c.

i. e. " All the accounts in the northern tongue, which adhere to truth, commence at the time, when the Turks and Asiatics settled in the north; whence it may be truly said, that the language, which we call Northern, came with them here into the North, and spread over Saxony, Denmark, and Sweden, Norway, and some parts of England. The leader of these people was Odin the son of Thor; he had many sons. Many trace their descent from Odin; he established his sons in the country, and made them rulers over it. One of his sons was named Skiolldur, who took to himself the land, now called Denmark; but at that time those lands, which the Asiatics inhabited, were called the lands of the Gods, and the nation the people or race of the Gods. Boundaries were fixed between Skiolldur and his brother Ingfreir, who dwelt in the kingdom now called Sweden. Odin and his sons were very wise and deeply learned, beautiful in countenance, and mighty in strength. Many others of their race were men of great eminence with various perfections; and the

people took some of them to worship and believe in, and called them their Gods." *Rymbegla*, 3. 1. *p.* 316.

Having mentioned the various countries, in which was spoken the ancient language of Odin, now called the Icelandic, it may not be improper to add the following translation of a passage in Baron Holberg's reign of king Canute concerning its prevalence in England. "It is to be remarked, that various languages were used in Great Britain from the first arrival of the Anglo-Saxons. The English tongue, or that, which was spoken by the Angli, differed very little from the Danish, because the Angli came from Jutland, on which account their language was also called by ancient writers Cimbric or Gothic. This language was spoken in the provinces, which lay north of the river Thames, as the Saxon was in the south. Although they differed from each other, yet the distinction was not so great, but that each of them could be understood by both nations, the Angli and the Saxons. These languages flourished together in the country, till the heptarchy was

abolished and the seven small kingdoms united; for then the Saxon began to prevail together with the Saxon kings, and the English or Danish fell gradually into disuse. But afterwards, when a new swarm of Danes established in the country, the Danish came into use again, although it was not the same, which the Angli or South Jutlanders had brought with them; so that there may be reckoned three distinct tongues besides the British or Welsh language, namely the English or old Danish, the Saxon, and the new Danish, which last was principally spoken in Northumberland, East Anglia, and Mercia, of which the Danes had gained possession. At last, as the Danish was the language of the court under Canute the great and his two successors, the other provinces, even the West Saxons, were forced to accustom themselves to the Danish dialect then in fashion; so that the old West Saxon tongue was corrupted by the Danish, as we now see the Danish corrupted and likely to be completely changed by the German, which is at present the court language

of the country. For the court is the principal school for language, as all affect to speak the same, or at least attempt to introduce words or expressions from it into the general tongue. So it happened with the Danish under the three Danish kings: but when their rule had ended, and Edward the Confessor acceded to the throne, the Saxon became the language of the court again, until William the conqueror gained possession of England, and introduced the Norman tongue, which was a mixture of Danish and French. The English of the present day is a composition of all these languages." *Holbergs Dannemarks riges Historie*, 1. 150.

V. 17. "*Jotunheim.*"
V. 19. "*Thursi.*" } The situation of Jotunheim is supposed to have been north east of the Baltic, and to have extended from the White Sea even to the north western coast of Norway, where Helgeland was inhabited by a nation of this race. They were indiscriminately called by the names of Jotni, or Jæ-

ter, and Thursi, Riser, Kiæmper, (whence the old English word Kemp and Kemperye man, a soldier), and several others expressive of their size and ferocity. Angrim Jonas, who was fully convinced of the gigantic bulk of the ancient inhabitants of the north before the time of Odin, is very desirous of establishing their descent from the Canaanites, who were routed by Joshua, which he has labored at length to prove in the first book of his Crymogæa. After enumerating the most conspicuous giants of the north, (the last of whom, fifteen cubits high, is said to have been killed by king Magnus Erichson in 1338) to shew how wide they extended in earlier times he continues, " Adde, quòd provincia quædam Norvegiæ seu Finmarkiæ con, termina Risaland (id est, gigantum terra, nam en rise et rese gigantem significat) antiquitus dicta est; a quâ non longe abest Jötum heimar, id est, gigantum habitatio; (unde etiamnum en Jæt gigas dicitur) ut nihil dicam de Jötumland, quo nomine nostratibus dicebatur olim, quæ hodie vocatur Jutland, et complu,

ribus etiam Cimbrorum terra seu Chersonesus; eo quoque nomine facto a Kemper, id est, gigantibus pugnantibus." *Crymogæa*, *p.* 42. Schöning, who completely agrees with Angrim Jonas as to the reality of their immense size, rejects the idea of their coming into the north from Canaan; for which indeed there is no ground, but the similarity of their bulk, and the letter th in their language, which is supposed to be of Hebrew origin. Schöning reckons, that they were descendants of the Thussagetæ, which he considers to be compounded from Thursi or Thussi (for they are sometimes called Hrim-thussi or cold Thussi) and Jotner or Jeter; and supposes them to have been first driven from their old habitations at the time of the famous expedition of Darius against the Scythians. They were originally connected with the tribes, which Odin afterwards led to the same countries in consequence of the violence of Mithridates, and spoke the same language. See *Schönings nordiske folkes oprindelse*, *p.* 157. It is certainly probable, that the first

inhabitants of the north were of superior strength and stature, accustomed, as they must have been, from the rugged nature of the climate and country, to a hardy and fearless life, and at the time of their first establishment amply supplied with animal food to encrease their bulk, and enable them to contend with the severity of the seasons. When Odin invaded the same regions with a second hoard of settlers, he resolved to exterminate those, whom he could not subdue, or win over to his party; and he therefore represented them to his followers as miscreated monsters and sorcerers; and all the accounts of their enormous stature, which probably had some foundation, were naturally exaggerated by their opponents.

V. 22. "*Alfi.*" The Edda of Snorro gives the following account of Alfheim, and its inhabitants, who were inferior to the Asi or Gods, and held the rank of secondary divinities; and from their name is derived our word Elf. The Latin writers have thought proper to call them Fauni, from a prevailing desire of

identifying the Roman and Scandinavian mythology. "Sa er thar stadr," &c. *i. e.* "There is a place, which is called Alfheim; there dwell a people hight Liosalfar or Light Alfs; but the Dauckalfar or Dark Alfs inhabit under ground, and they are unlike the others in appearance, and still more unlike in fact. The Light Alfs are whiter in appearance, than the Sun; but the Dark Alfs more swarthy, than pitch." *Göranssons Edda, p.* 34. The Alfi were in fact a tribe related to the Asi, and inhabited the province of Bahus, a part of Norway now belonging to Sweden.

V. 27. "*Fathom.*" Raustom. It is not known exactly, what this measure is; though probably much more, than a fathom: but the precise depth is of no importance.

V. 33. "*Midgard.*" The boundary between the Asi and Jotuns or giants. The following account of it is given in the Edda of Snorro.—"Kringlott er jorth," &c. *i. e.* The earth is circular, and a deep sea lies round it; and on the shores they (the sons of

Bör, viz. Odin, Vili, and Ve) gave a habitation to the giants; but in front within the earth they made a town against the attacks of the giants, and for this purpose they used the eyebrows of Yme, and called the town Midgard. They cast his brains into the air, and made the clouds of them; as is here stated:

Of Yme's flesh was the earth created,
Of his sweat the sea, the hills of his bones,
The meadows of his hair, and of his head the heaven,
And of his eyebrows the blithe Gods made
Midgard for the sons of men, and of his brains
Were all the hard-tempered clouds created.

When the sons of Bör walked on the sea strand, they found two trees, and of these they formed mankind. The first gave breath, the second life, the third hearing and sight; and the man was called Askr and the woman Emla. From them sprung mankind, to whom a habitation was given under Midgard. After that they made Asgard in the middle of the world. There dwelt Odin, and the race of those, from whom our race is

descended." *Göranssons Edda, p.* 20. See also *Schöning's nordiske folkes oprindelse, p.* 101, &c.

V. 37, and 38.) "Opt sitianda saugor um fallaz,
Ok liggiandi l'ygi um bellir."

These lines are translated literally. It is probably an old proverbial saying, and seems to mean, that, if Loke waited till he sat down, he might forget half his story; and, if he waited till he had slept upon it, he would probably invent a false one.

V. 53. "*Asiniæ.*" The wives and daughters of the Asi.

V. 56. "*Heimdallar.*" Literally, Heimdallar, the whitest of the Asi. He was the son of Odin, from whom he received the kingdom of Scania. "Heimdallar was called the *white God;* he is great and holy; he was *the son of nine virgins, all sisters.* He is the sentinel of the Gods, and sits at the extremity of heaven to guard the bridge against the mountain-giants. He requires less sleep, than a bird; he sees by night, as well as by day, a hundred miles (rasta) before him; he

hears the grass grow on the earth, and the wool on the flocks, and every thing, that sounds. He has a trumpet, which is called Giallarhorn, and its blast is heard throughout the world." See *Göranssons Edda, p.* 44. This probably meant, that he was the God of light, which springs from the nine heavens or worlds, as they are numbered in Vafthrudnismal, "nió kom ec heima fyr niflhel nedan." *i. e.* I have visited nine worlds above the abyss of hell.

V. 57. "*Vani.*" The Vani were a nation, who dwelt near the river Tanais, which in the old northern tongue was called the Vana, and they extended towards the Volga. See *Yngl. Sag. c.* 1. Before the emigration of Odin a long war had been carried on between the Vani and their neighbours the Asi, which, after a dubious contest, terminated in peace and exchange of hostages. Niorder and his son Frey were hostages from the Vani, and they accompanied Odin into the north. See *Yngl. Sag. c.* 4. The Vani had the character of superior wisdom and learning, as appears also in Scirnis-för in

the old Edda, where Gerdur asks Scirner, whether he comes from the Alfi, the Asi, or the wise Vani. "Hvat er that A'lfa, ne A'sa sona, ne vissa Vana?" The same epithet is applied to them in Vafthrudnismal. Schöning reckons, that they were a Grecian colony, and on this account superior to their neighbours in learning. See *N. F. Oprindelse, p.* 268.

V. 60. It was customary to hang the keys to the waist of the bride, to shew, that the management of the household was intrusted to her.

V. 82. "Thor possesses two goats and a chariot; the goats are called Tangmoster and Tangsnir (or Tangrisner). When he goes to Jotunheim, Thor drives the chariot, which is drawn by them; and on that account he is called Auko-Thor." See *Göranssons Edda, p.* 38.

V. 88. "*Noatun.*" The habitation of Niörder. See *Göranssons Edda, p.* 40. *Yngl. Sag. c.* 5. and *Grimnismal, st.* 16.

V. 91. "*Jewels.*" In the original menia, necklaces

or bracelets. It means the gold and jewels taken in battle from the spoils of the enemy, and perhaps had some reference to the celebrated necklace of Freyia. Rings seem to have been used amongst the ancient inhabitants of the north for money. In the lamentation of Sterkader he calls himself Hringa vana, without rings; by which he means without money. The same connexion between rings and money may be observed in this ode, where the giant's sister asks for rings, and in the last stanza it is said, that she received blows instead of rings and money. Baugr, a ring, which is the same as the French word bague, is also used to express money in Icelandic. See *Haconarmál*, and *Orkneyinga Saga*, *p.* 156. They seem to have been universally worn by warriors, and of course formed a valuable part of the booty. A very curious account of the regulations, under which the spoil was divided, is found in the thirty-eighth chapter of Hirdskraa, from which the following passage is translated. "Now shall it be told, how the spoil shall be divided

after battle, if God gives both victory and booty. This is the ancient custom of the king and the Birkibeini, to make a full tythe of all the plunder, and not withdraw any thing. First shall they blow to council, in whatever place may seem best. The standard bearer shall carry the king's standard there, and let make a circular enclosure, and the standard shall be placed in the middle. This is the ancient form of words; "What bearest thou to the spear?". Every man shall bear to the spear, whatever booty he has got, and swear, that he has not secreted any thing, and knows not, that any other has. Twelve men, whom the king names to divide the plunder, shall separate all, that is brought to the spear, first into halves, then into quarters, and afterwards each quarter again into halves. But those of the principal men and pilots, whom the king names, shall divide the whole suite first into halves, and then into quarters. Then shall lots be laid in the bosoms of each quarter; and they shall chuse first, whose lot comes up first; and so every one,

as his lot falls, till each man shall have got his share." And in the same chapter; "It is the custom of the court not to despoil a dead body, but to leave on it both shirt and breeches. Yet is it right to take silver, if there is any upon it. But whoever strips a body more, than aforesaid, shall be fined, as follows." &c. See *Hird-skraa*, *p.* 286.

The Birkibeini (as may be seen in the seveh last chapters of Heimskringla) were a miscellaneous banditti, who first made their appearance in the thirteenth year of the reign of king Magnus Erlingson in the twelfth century under the auspices of Eysteirn (or Augustin), a supposed son of king Eysteirn, who layed claim to the crown of Norway. Being overpowered by the natives in the northern parts of Norway, which they had pillaged, they betook themselves to the woods and desert places; where they clothed themselves with the bark of trees, from which their name was derived.

V. 96. "*The spouse of Sifia.*" Thor. "In the northern hemisphere Thor espoused a prophetess, whose name was Sibil; but we call her Sif." See

Göranssons Edda, p. 5. Thor was at all times extremely voracious. In Hymis-qvida, where he is also the spouse of Sifia, he eats two oxen for supper.

" A't Sifiarr verr, athr sofa gengi,
Einn med aullo eyxn tva Hymis." *St. 15.*

V. 108. Sandvig, who has translated this ode into Danish, appears to me to have misunderstood this line, in which he makes Thor start, instead of Thrym. " Thor sprang langs udaf den lange sal." *p.* 190. In the original it is *hann*, he, and it undoubtedly refers to the astonishment of Thrym on discovering the savage countenance of Thor under the veil.

V. 126. " *Slaughter'd.*" In the Icelandic, lamdir whence the vulgar word, to lam, which is still in use.

V. 130. & 131. " Hon skell um hlaut fur skillínga,
En haugg hamars fur hringa fiöld."

" She got blows instead of skillings, (a coin nearly answering to a halfpenny) and strokes of the hammer instead of many rings." This seems to be the origin of our old proverb, " to get more kicks than halfpence."

THE

BATTLE

OF

HAFUR'S BAY,

A. D. 885.

From the old Icelandic by Hornklof, printed in Heimskringla, Per. ed. v. 1. p. 93. Schön. ed. v. 1. p. 95.

1803.

Loud in Hafur's echoing bay
Heard ye the battle fiercely bray,
'Twixt Kiotva rich, and Harald bold!
Eastward sail the ships of war;
The graven bucklers gleam afar,
And monsterous heads adorn the prows of gold.

Glittering shields of purest white,
And swords, and Celtic falchions bright,
And western chiefs the vessels bring:
Loudly scream the savage rout,
The maddening champions wildly shout,
And long and loud the twisted hauberks ring.

Firm in fight they proudly vie
With him, whose might will gar them fly,
Imperial Utstein's warlike head.
Forth his gallant fleet he drew,
Soon as the hope of battle grew,
But many a buckler brast, ere Haklang bled.

Fled the lusty Kiotva then
Before the fair-hair'd king of men,
And bade the islands shield his flight.
Warriors wounded in the fray
Beneath the thwarts all gasping lay,
Where headlong cast they mourn'd the loss of light.

Gall'd by many a missive stone
(Their golden shields behind them thrown)
Homeward the grieving soldiers speed;
Fast from Hafur's bay they hie;
East-mountaineers o'er Jadar fly,
And thirst for goblets of the sparkling mead.

Brast, broke with noise. *Thwarts*, benches for the rowers.

NOTES

ON

THE BATTLE OF HAFUR's BAY.

Heimskringla. This valuable history of Norway (so called from its first words, Kringla heimsins, *i. e.* orbis terrarum) was written by Snorro Sturleson, a noble Icelander, who was born in 1178, and died by a violent death in 1241, having stood pre-eminent amongst his countrymen in rank, situation, wealth, and learning. The first part, which is called Ynglinga saga, gives a short account of Odin and his eldest descendants; but the reigns of the later kings, from the time of Halfdan father of Harald Harfager to the defeat of the Birkibeini by Magnus Erlingson in 1177, are fully detailed. The work of Snorro, like most Icelandic writings, contains many quotations from the old historical poets, who recorded the expeditions, in which they generally accompanied their princes, and from

whose works, collated and corrected by oral tradition, this excellent history was compiled. It was first printed in 1697, in two vols. fol. at Stockholm by Peringskiöld, and afterwards at Copenhagen in three vols. fol. by Schöning and Thorlacius.

These lines were written by Thornbiörn Hornklof, one of the Scalds of Harald Harfager, who was the founder of the Norwegian monarchy. Harald had inherited some provinces from his father Halfdan, and the following singular circumstance first excited him to reduce all the petty kingdoms under his dominion. Eric prince of Hordaland had a daughter called Gyda, equally distinguished for beauty and spirit. Her fame had reached the ears of Harald, who was passionately fond of women; and, little expecting to be rejected, he sent ambassadors to conduct her to his court. "I will not" (replied the haughty Gyda to his messengers) "so cast away my virginity, as to take for husband a prince, who possesses only a few provinces; and wonderful it seems to me, that no prince has spirit enough

to unite all Norway under his dominion, and to rule over it, as king Gorm rules in Denmark, and king Eric at Upsala. Tell king Harald, that on this condition alone will I consent to become his bride, that he shall for my sake subdue the whole of Norway, and govern it with the same free power, that is held in Denmark by Gorm, or by Eric in the kingdom of Sweden." *(See Heimskringla, and Schön. N. Hist.)* Roused by this spirited answer, king Harald awoke, as from a dream; and made, according to the singular custom of the time, a solemn vow, never to clip or comb his hair, till he should have extended his sway over the whole country. His talents were equal to the arduous task, which he undertook: prudent, steady, and always victorious, he proceded from province to province, ever keeping in view the great object of universal conquest. Alarmed at length by his continual success, the provinces of Hordaland, Rogaland, Agder, and Thylemark, formed under Kiotva the rich, prince of Agder, and his son Hakleng, a powerful

league to resist his progress. A great battle was fought in 885, and they were completely defeated by Harald in Hafur's bay, on the coast of Jadar, a province immediately south of the port of Stavanger in Norway. After this victory his empire was established over the whole country, and none remained sufficiently powerful to contend with him; but many emigrated to the north of Sweden, or settled in Iceland, which had been lately discovered, and was uninhabited.

V. 6. "*Monsterous heads, &c.*" Such is king Haco's ship described to have been in the account of the Norwegian expedition against Scotland in 1263. "Til thessarar ferdar, &c. *i. e.* During this voyage king Haco had that great vessel, which he had caused to be constructed at Bergen. It was built entirely of oak, and contained twenty-seven banks of oars. It was ornamented with heads and necks of dragons beautifully overlaid with gold." *Johnstone, p.* 24.

V. 9. "*Western chiefs.*" By these lines it seems, that Kiotva received some assistance from France or the British Isles.

V. 10. "*Savage.*" Ulfhedner, properly wolflike; so called from their fierceness, or from wearing the skins of wolves.

V. 15. "*Utstein.*" One of the palaces, in which Harald was wont to reside.

V. 18. "*Brast.*" Icelandic, *bresta.* The use of this word cannot be better exemplified, than by the famous answer of Einar to Olave Trygvason, king of Norway, in the fatal battle, in which that valiant champion of Christianity was overpowered with his small squadron by Earl Eric and the kings of Denmark and Sweden, on his return from Vindland (which included Meklenburg and Pomerania) in the year 1000. His followers defended themselves with desperate resolution, and the Danish and Swedish fleets were repulsed; but Eric vigorously renewed the attack with his Norwegians. Einar, an expert bowman in king Olave's ship, had aimed at him twice. The first arrow flew by his head, the second between his arm and body; Einar had put a third arrow to the bow, which probably would have proved fatal, and

turned the fortune of the day, when the string was struck by a broad-pointed weapon, and broke with noise. "What brast?" said Olave, who heard the sound. "Norway from thine hands, King!" replied Einar. King Olave was vexed, and answered, "That must God decide, not thy bow." Then the fight waxed hotter, and most of the principal men in the king's ship were slain, and the quarters so thinned, that Einar and his followers boarded the vessel, and rushed on like savage wolves. See *Olaf Tryg. Sag. c.* 69. *Reenh.*

V. 20. "*Fair-hair'd king.*" Harald Harfager.

V. 26. "*Golden shields.*" Svafnis salnæfrar, literally the tiles of the hall of Odin; which are here used for gilt shields. In Grimnismal, st. 9. it is stated, that the ceiling or roof of Odin's hall was made with shields, and the benches covered with coats of mail. These lines are quoted in the Edda, as written by Thiodolph, a poet of great reputation, who flourished at the same time as Hornklof. See *Göranssons edition*, p. 9. where their meaning has been completely misunderstood by the translator.

VEGTAM's SONG;

OR,

THE DESCENT OF ODIN.

1803.

THE Gods did all to council crowd,
The Goddesses talk'd fast and loud;
And this the theme of their debate,
If Balder's dreams were big with fate.
Heavy the hero's slumbers were,
Joy seem'd in sleep to disappear;
To mystic shrines the giants press,
And ask, if this bodes new distress.
The shrines have said, that Uller's * friend,
The loveliest, to death must tend:
Frigga and Suafner † grieving hear,
And Gods debate with anxious fear;
They send, and sue all things to seal
The peace with oaths for Balder's weal:

* Balder. † A name for Odin.

All nature swore to hold from strife;
Frigga took pledges for his life.
Yet did the Lord * of slaughter fear,
The sprites of joy must disappear;
He call'd the Gods, and counsel sought;
But each proposed a different thought.
" Uprose † the king of men with speed,
And saddled strait his coal-black steed."

&c. &c. &c.

See Gray's poems.

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* Odin.

† *Literally*, Uprose Odin, guardian of mankind,
And on Sleipner he laid the saddle.
Thence he rode to the lowest abyss of hell.
&c. &c.

NOTE

ON

VEGTAM's SONG.

THE foregoing lines are the commencement of an old Icelandic ode in Sæmund's Edda, of which the remainder has been beautifully imitated by Gray. His translation was made from the quotation in Bartholinus, (Ant. Dan.) who did not publish the whole poem; but these stanzas are almost necessary to make the rest intelligible; and on this account I have translated them closely, to serve as an introduction to that excellent fragment. An imitation of the whole ode has been published by Mr. Cottle in a volume entitled * *Sæmund's Edda translated into English verse;* but Mr. Cottle has taken such liberties with the Icelandic poetry and mythology, which in some places he has purposely amplified, and in others misunderstood, that,

* This is a great mistake; for the volume, which Mr. C. has translated, does not comprehend half Sæmund's Edda, and professes only to contain the mythological Odes not published by Resenius.

if he had published his work as original, he could scarcely have been accused of plagiarism. It may be sufficient to quote his translation of the third and fourth stanzas of this ode, to shew how much he has departed from the original. The literal translation of the Icelandic words would be, "The oracles have said, that the friend of Uller singularly lovely was doomed to die. That gave sorrow to Frigga and Suafner, and the other Gods; they came to a decision, that they should send out to all things, and sue for peace, not to hurt Balder. All nature gave oath to abstain. Frigga took the oaths and promises of all;" which Mr. C. has thus amplified:

"The sacred oracles declare—
Balder must for death prepare!
Asi sad the tidings hear;
Frigga drops the impassion'd tear,
Dignify'd in silent grief,
Odin seeks not such relief:
But deeply ponders in his mind,
Safety for his son to find.

Let us, he cry'd, forbid to fly
The stormy powers, that rule the sky;
League with the light'nings; thunders chain;
And quell the uprising, angry main:
Lest, mission'd by the powers of fate,
They in direful ambush wait.
For Balder, Odin, thus afraid,
Peace with willing nature made;
And every jarring element
For once harmoniously consent." *p.* 217.

Mr. Cottle's ode begins, "The morn was up; the blast blew loud;" and ends thus,

"Muspelli their banners raise,
"And Surtur wrap the world in blaze."

There is nothing similar to these lines in the original, and the Muspelli and Surtur are not even alluded to; but they have been drawn out of a Latin note in the Copenhagen edition, to be placed in the text. Gray's beautiful imitation is sufficiently close, except in a few passages, where he has admitted some little amplifications, that tend to convey notions respecting the Ice-

landic mythology, which are not warranted by the original; such as, "*coal-black* steed, *raven* hair, *thrice* he traced the Runic rhyme, the portals *nine* of hell, foam and *human* gore." But in every other respect it is a most valuable translation, and the public cannot desire another, though it may require some illustration. Frigga, when she took the oaths of all nature, overlooked the misletoe; Loke, having observed this, maliciously persuaded Hoder to dart a branch of it at Balder, which proved fatal to him. Vali, or Ali, the son of Odin and Rinda, revenged his death by slaying Hoder; which wonderous feat he performed, when he was but one night old, Ein-nættr; as is stated in this ode, and in the 32d stanza of Volospá. It is not certain, what Odin means by the question concerning the weeping virgins; but it has been supposed, that it alludes to the embassy afterwards sent by Frigga to try to redeem Balder from the infernal regions, and that Odin betrays his divinity by mentioning what had not yet happened. The object

of this embassy was frustrated by the perfidy of Loke; who, having assumed (as was supposed) the shape of an old woman, refused to join in the general petition, by which failure the spell was rendered ineffectual: but the Gods, having with difficulty made Loke their prisoner, bound him with a strong chain, which he will not break till the end of the world, or (as the Icelanders call it) the twilight of the Gods. To this the prophetess alludes in the last stanza.

Gray's Fatal sisters is very inferior to his descent of Odin, and in some passages he has lost much of the strength and spirit of the original; as for instance in the ninth stanza,

Nu er ogurligt um at litaz,
At dreyrugt sky dregr med himni;
Mun lopt litad lyda blodi,
Adr spar varar springa allar;

from which the following lines are translated, without the insertion or omission of a word.

'Tis horrid now to gaze around,
While clouds thro' heaven gore-dropping sail;
Air must be stain'd with blood of men,
Ere all our oracles shall fail.

Gray has translated it thus,

"Horror covers all the heath;
Clouds of carnage blot the Sun."

I have added a close translation of a few lines from the descent of Odin in the Icelandic metre, which is regulated by a corresponding letter in the two halves of each verse, instead of rhyme. One vowel is allowed to correspond with another.

The dog he met from hell advancing;
His adverse breast with blood was clotted,
His jaws for combat keenly grinning,
Fierce he bay'd the spell's dread father,
Oped his huge throat, and howl'd long after.
On rode Odin; the deep earth sounded;
He reach'd the lofty house of Hela;
Ugger rode to the Eastern portals,

There he knew was the tomb of Vala.
Strange verse he sung the slain enchanting, 35
Traced mystic letters northward looking,
&c. &c. &c.

However inharmonious to an English ear, they may serve to give a more distinct idea of Icelandic poetry, and to shew exactly in what degree Gray has varied from the original. Ugger is another name for Odin. He has many, which are used indiscriminately, as Tonans or Saturnius for Jupiter. In this metre two corresponding letters are sometimes required in the first half of the line, and one in the second, as v. 35. When there is but one in each, the second generally commences with it, as v. 26 and 28. Some of the Icelandic metres are much more difficult; as,

*Fyll*i ec *f*lock thin, sti*ll*ir;
*Fell*r á hönd mer *el*li.

Evind in Heimskringla.

THE DYING SONG OF ASBIORN IN *ORMS STOROLFSONAR SAGA.*

From the old Icelandic printed in Bartholinus, Ant. Dan. p. 158.

1803.

KNOW, gentle mother, know,
Thou wilt not comb my flowing hair,
When summer sweets return,
In Denmark's vallies, Svanvhide fair!
O whilom had I fondly vow'd
To hie me to my native land!
Now must my panting side be torn
By my keen foe's relentless brand.

Not such those days of yore,
When blithe we quaff'd the foaming ale,
Or urged across the waves
From Hordaland the flying sail;

Or gladly drank the sparkling mead,
While social mirth beguiled the hour.
Now lonely in the narrow den
I mourn the giant's savage pow'r.

Not such those days of yore,
When forth we went in warlike show:
Storolf's all-glorious son,
Stood foremost on the armed prow;
As sailing fast to Oresound
The long-keel'd vessels cleft the wave.
Now toled into the fatal snare
I mourn beneath the sorcerer's cave.

Not such those days of yore,
When conquest mark'd proud Ormur's way,
Stirring the storm of war,
To glut the greedy beasts of prey.

Toled, led by deceit.

Beneath his thundering falchion's stroke
Flow'd the deep waters red with gore,
And many a gallant warrior fell
To feed the wolves on Ifa's shore.

Not such those days of yore,
When south on Elfa's rocky coast
Warring with weapons keen
I fiercely smote the adverse host.
Oft from the loudly sounding bow
Ormur's unerring arrows flew;
Deadly, whene'er his wrath pursued
The bold sea-rover's trusty crew *.

Not such those days of yore,
When, swift to meet the haughty foe,
We roused the strife of swords,
Nor e'er declined the hostile blow.

* After this line two stanzas are omitted, containing proper names.

Seldom did I the steel withhold,
Or let to sting the warrior's side;
But ay did Ormur's ruthless arm
Humble our foemen's sturdy pride.

O did thy generous soul
Thy dying fere's last anguish know,
Ormur, thine heart would rise,
Thy warlike eyes with fury glow!
Friendship, to venge my fatal wrongs,
(If power remain) will point the way;
And soon beneath thy biting glaive
My torturer rue this cruel day!

Let to sting, forbear from stinging. *Fere*, companion.

NOTES

ON

THE SONG OF ASBIORN.

Asbiorn the proud (or rather the accomplished, for that was the old signification of the word *prudi)* was descended from an illustrious family established in the provinces of Nordmöre and Hordaland in Norway. A few years before his death, which took place in 995, he united in fellowship of arms with Ormur Storolfson, a distinguished Icelandic warrior; and they carried on together a piratical warfare, till Ormur returned to his native country. A Jotun, or giant, called Bruse, dwelt in a cavern upon a small island on the coast of Norway, who, on account of his stature, strength, and skill in sorcery, was deemed invincible. The difficulty of the enterprise excited Asbiörn to attempt to slay him, for it was generally esteemed as laudable to destroy a Jotun, as a bear or other wild beast; and no feat

tended so much to exalt the reputation of a warrior. Asbiörn landed on the island, and proceded alone at daybreak to the cavern, which was so dark, that Bruse, who suspected the object of his visit, sprung upon him unawares, and put him to a cruel and lingering death. Asbiörn did not utter a single groan; but, lamenting only, that he had not had an opportunity of measuring his strength with the giant, composed these stanzas, which he is said to have recited during his last moments. Singular as this may now appear, it was a common affectation amongst the warriors of the North, whose greatest pride was to display indifference at the hour of death, and to smile and jest in their last agonies. The most remarkable instances of their fortitude are collected in the fifth chapter of Bartholinus; but in this they certainly did not surpass the American Indians, who uttered their death-song with calm intrepidity in the midst of torments too horrid to relate, recounted the exploits of their youth, boasted of their own cruelties, and suggested even to their enemies

" more exquisite methods of torture, and more sensible parts of the body to be afflicted *."

Skill in poetry was an accomplishment almost indispensable to a northern warrior; and, although the rules of their metre were strict and various, they were habituated to speak in verse on every important incident; and the whole of their life was like a tragic opera.

" Ferox bello, tamen inter arma,
Sive jactatam religârat udo
Litore navem,
Liberum, et Musas, Veneremque, et illi
Semper hærentem puerum canebat."

The Jotuns (as I have before stated) were the people, who had settled in the north before the time of Odin. They were a race of large stature; and seldom built houses, but dwelt in the caves, which are numerous in those rocky countries, and were looked upon as sorcerers. Mengerda, the half sister of Bruse, repeated the dying song of Asbiörn to Ormur, whom she

* *Burke's Europ. Settl.* I. 119.

assisted in revenging his death. It is preserved in Orms Saga; and, whether really composed by Asbiörn or not, from its style is certainly not of much later date. It contains some words, with which I am unacquainted; and in those passages I have adhered to the interpretation of Bartholinus. In the Kiæmpe viiser is a Danish translation of this ode, which I have not seen. I have omitted two stanzas, which contain only an enumeration of the names of Asbiörn's companions.

V. 21. "*To Oresound.*" At Eyrarsundi. The straits between Denmark and Sweden, commonly called the Sound.

V. 23. "*Toled.*" Tældr, from the verb *tæla*, to tole, or lead on by deceit into a snare. It is derived from *tal*, deceit. Johnson in his dictionary has called this expressive word "a barbarous provincial term," though he has quoted the authority of Locke. It is singular, that he did not recollect, that it is used in one of the finest passages in Beaumont and Fletcher,

which Milton has imitated, but not surpassed in his Comus.

" Or voices calling me at dead of night,
To make me follow, and so tole me on
Thro' mire and standing pools, to find my ruin."

Faithf. Sheph. act 1st.

V. 32. " *Ifa.*" Generally supposed to mean the Veissel; but Mr. Johnstone, in his glossary to Lodbrokar quida, says, that it is the river Iva in Angermannia, a province of Sweden; but he does not state his authority.

V. 35. " *Elfa's rocky coast.*" Part of the coast of Bahus.

GUNLAUG AND RAFEN.

From the Solarliod in Sæmund's Edda, Stanza tenth, &c.

1803.

THE rich delights of love
To many fatal prove;
From women oft does sorrow spring:
Much evil do they bear,
Though fashion'd purely fair
And chaste by heaven's almighty King.

To Gunlaug fondly join'd
In peace was Rafen's mind;
Each was the other's dearest joy:
Ere they, to fury moved,
One beauteous woman loved,
Whose peerless charms did both destroy.

Nor after heeded they
Or sports or light of day,
All for that blooming maiden bright;
Nor any other form
Their wilder'd thoughts could warm,
Save that fair body's lovely light.

Mournful and sad to them
Each night's dark shadow came,
Nor ever found they slumbers sweet;
But from their hapless fate
Wax'd quickly savage hate
Between true friends with deadly heat.

Passions of strange excess
Beget severe distress,
And punishment of keenest woe.
The single fight they tried,
For that delightful bride,
And each received the fatal blow.

NOTE

ON

GUNLAUG AND RAFEN.

In the Icelandic the fictitious names Svafader and Skarthedin are used instead of Gunlaug and Rafen, but the author certainly alluded to their celebrated history; and deservedly is it celebrated, since, in consequence of their fatal enmity, the legal duel was abolished, by the full public assembly of the Icelanders, in the year 1011, only eleven years after the first establishment of the Christian religion amongst them. The vanity of the natives of more temperate regions has induced them to imagine, that the ungenial climate of the northern countries had stunted the genius of their inhabitants, and arrested their progress towards civilization. But so far is this fact from being true, that at that early period, when the rest of Europe was involved

in darkness, their understandings seem to have been far more enlarged. Not many years before the custom of duelling was finally abolished in Iceland, the single combat was established by Otho the great in Germany, as the final decision, not only on the rights and character of individuals, but on the general principles of equity and jurisprudence. The important laws of inheritance were instituted by that powerful emperor, not according to the counsel of statesmen and legislators, the practice of ancient times, or the political interests of his dominions, but the uncertain event of a superstitious duel. Within half a century after this famous decree of the Icelandic assembly, Henry the fourth of Germany was prevented only by the accidental death of his accuser from exhibiting the extraordinary scene of an arbitrary prince descending from the imperial throne, and waving the privileges of allegiance, to defend his private character against the attacks of a rebellious subject. At the instigation of the same emperor, we find a duke of Bavaria branded with

infamy for refusing the challenge of an obscure and discredited calumniator, and deprived of his liberty and dominions by the unanimous suffrage of the Saxon princes. Nor was this effected by the servility of dependent flatterers to gratify the wish of Henry, but by the fixed decision of those high-mindod princes, who not only resisted his encroachments, but drove him at length barefooted and defenceless, to receive his sentence at Canosa from the sullen despotism of Gregory the seventh. I have particularized these circumstances, for the purpose of marking, that, at the very time, when the enlightened Icelanders cast aside this superstitious and barbarous custom, in the rest of Europe it was in its meridian glory. To how late a period it has lasted, is known to all. I have subjoined a brief account of the history of Rafen and Gunlaug, which is one of the most entertaining old Icelandic works, and was printed in 4to. from the manuscripts at Copenhagen in 1775.

Gunlaug was the son of Illugi, a man of great

wealth and authority in Iceland. He was a youth of large and robust stature, and distinguished by his poetry, which was so satyrical, that he acquired the name of Ormstunga, or Snake-tongue. In his earliest youth he was bold and restless; and at the age of fifteen, having quarrelled with his father, who would not permit him to travel, he fled to the house of Thorstein son of the famous Egill Skallagrimsson, who received him with kindness. Thorstein had a daughter called Helga the fair, who was esteemed the most beautiful woman in the island. A mutual and fatal attachment soon commenced between her and Gunlaug, and the wild disposition of his mind was considerably softened by her gentle conversation. The three following years were passed by Gunlaug partly at the abode of Thorstein, and partly at that of his father; at the expiration of which he again pressed Illugi to send him abroad. The request was now granted, and a share in a trading vessel was purchased for him. While Thorkell, who was to be the companion of his

voyage, was employed in loading the vessel, Gunlaug preferred he society of Helga, and returned to the house of Thorstein. He soon found an opportunity of asking for the hand of his daughter, which at first was refused on account of his fickle disposition; but Thorstein at length agreed, that the marriage should take place, if at the end of three years he returned to claim the promise. Soon after Gunlaug sailed from Iceland, and, having visited several other countries, he arrived at the court of king Olave at Upsala. There he met his countryman Rafen, a man of noble birth, and skilled in poetry; with whom he formed a close intimacy, which however was disturbed by a dispute about precedence in reciting their poems before the king. Rafen returned to Iceland; and at the expiration of the third year, Gunlaug being still absent, he solicited the hand of the fair Helga. Some difficulties were made by Thorstein, but he gave his consent at last to Rafen, in case Gunlaug should not return in the course of the next summer. A day was fixed for the nuptials:

Gunlaug, who had been severely hurt in wrestling, did not appear; and the melancholy Helga was forced to espouse her new suitor. On that very day Gunlaug arrived at the house of his father, and would have proceded immediately to the abode of Thorstein, but his lameness rendered it impracticable. The sorrows of the lovely Helga were doubled by the faithful return of the fond companion of her childhood, and the society of her husband became hateful to her. Soon after Rafen was challenged by Gunlaug in the public assembly; for by the law of Iceland at that time, whoever had received an injury, might call out the offender to single combat. Rafen, as challenged, gave the first blow; his sword broke against the shield, but a splinter from it struck the face of Gunlaug. One being wounded, the other disarmed, each claimed the victory; but their relations interfered, and the next day, in a crowded assembly, it was decreed, that from that hour no duels should be fought in Iceland. Rafen afterwards challenged Gunlaug to meet him

again in Norway; and, after some delay, they and their followers arrived severally at Throndhiem: but earl Eric, who had heard their history, forbade their fighting in his dominions. Gunlaug passed the winter at his court in the deepest melancholy; but, galled at last by the satyrical reflections of some of the Norwegians, he asked leave to depart, and followed his antagonist towards the Swedish territory. By the side of a lake they met upon a spot called Dyngiunes; and their companions, having protested, that they could not remain inactive, were permitted to join in the combat. The guides, who were less ambitious, seated themselves, and did not interfere. The conflict was bloody and expeditious; Gunlaug and Rafen were soon the only survivors, and after a few blows Gunlaug cut off the foot of his enemy, who did not however fall, but supported himself by the stump of a tree. Gunlaug refused to continue the fight with a man, who was so maimed; but Rafen replied, that, "though he certainly was a little curtailed, if he could procure water

to drink, he should be still his match."—"Do not then deceive me," said Gunlaug, "if I bring thee water in my helmet." Rafen answered, "That will I not." Then went Gunlaug to the lake, and brought water in his helmet, and presented it to him. Rafen took it in his left hand, and at the same moment smote the naked head of Gunlaug with his sword. "Ill hast thou deceived me," said Gunlaug, "and this was most unmanly, when I trusted thee."—"It was so," replied Rafen, "but I cannot bear, that thou shouldst enjoy the fair Helga." The fight was then renewed, and Gunlaug slew him; but the wound in his head was mortal, and he expired after the third night. The beautiful Helga was afterwards married to a noble Icelander called Thorkell; but she never loved him, and retained the sad recollection of her early attachment till the hour of death.

THE

COMBAT

OF

HIALMAR AND ODDUR,

WITH

ANGANTYR AND HIS ELEVEN BROTHERS.

From the old Icelandic in the fifth chapter of Hervarar Saga, Verel. edit.

1803.

THEN went the sons of Angrym to Sams-ey; and, when they arrived there, they found the * champions-fury come upon them: they immediately landed, as was their custom, and fought with trees. Hialmar and Oddur lay on the other side of the island, in a a place called Unnarvoge; they both landed, and mounted an eminence, to try if they could discover the sons of Angrym. When Angrym's sons had ascended the island, they saw Hialmar's ship, and recognised it. The champions-fury was then upon them, and at its

* See the notes.

utmost height; they drew their swords, and bit the edges of their shields, and grinned violently. Then went they against the ships, and commenced a great contest. Oddur and Hialmar had two ships well equipped, of that sort, which were called Asks. Six of the champions went against each ship, and they made the attack on one side before, and on the other behind. But on board were such good warriors, that they all defended their quarters, and fell there. The champions slew all the men, who were in the ships, and regained the shore. The fury then quitted them. It is said concerning champions, that when the fury first leaves them, they are weak, like sick men. Now Oddur and Hialmar saw, what the champions were doing, and they hastened down towards the ships with the greatest speed. Then Oddur sung thus:

"Fiercely from the vessel come
Champions twelve, a fearful sight;
Thus unarm'd without their mails
Bold to meet the deadly fight."

Then sung Hialmar thus in answer :

" From the ship with warlike stride
(Sight, which might the bold appall)
Haste to seize the hostile spoil
Twelve together, champions tall.
Warriors two at close of day
We shall sup in Odin's hall ;
And those twelve victorious live,
Proudly live to boast our fall."

Such words of despair had Hialmar never spoken in the hearing of man. Then Oddur sung thus :

" To thy words of omen foul,
Hero, I in answer say ;
Champions twelve in Odin's hall
They shall sup at close of day ;
We shall both victorious live
Home to wend in proud array."

Now said Oddur ; " One of two things have we to chuse ; to fly into the woods, or abide here with armed hands." Then sung Hialmar :

" From our foes in deadly fight
Never let us basely fly;
Though I weet, the champions bear
Hideous mien and savage eye."

The champions now rushed towards them with drawn swords; they were all bloody, and one of them was a head taller, than the others. He had a sword, which shone forth like a sunbeam, and that was Angantyr with Tirfing. Then said Hialmar; " Wilt thou rather join combat with Angantyr alone, or with those eleven?" Oddur answered; " With Angantyr must I combat; for I trust better to my raiment, than to thine armour." Oddur had got a silk garment from Ireland, which weapons could never pierce. Hialmar said; " If thou esteemest it more to combat with Angantyr, then shall I do that; for where have we so acted, that thou shouldst go before me in the trial of manhood?" Then went Hialmar forward, and Angantyr against him; and they began their duel with mighty blows and violent collision; and no one could have be-

held a more vigorous onset, than was made by them. Oddur called to the champions, and said:

"One with one, if courage hold,
Wage we battle, warriors bold."

They assented. Then went forth Hiorvardur, and fought with Oddur; but the silk raiment sufficed so well for defence, that the sword pierced it not. He had also so good a blade, that it clove armour, even as a garment; and few blows gave he to Hiorvardur, before he fell. Then went forth Hervardur, and departed the same way; next Hrani; then one after one; but Oddur shewed them such hardy opposition, that he felled all the eleven brothers, yet was he not wounded. Then went Oddur, where Angantyr and Hialmar had combated, and thus he sung:

"Hialmar, what does thee betide;
Has thy color waxed pale?
Mighty wounds have wrought thee woe;
Sad I sing the mournful tale.
Furious blows have cleft thine helm,

On thy side have rent thy mail;
Now thy life is nearly spent;
Sad I sing the mournful tale."

Then sung Hialmar in answer:

"Sixteen wounds my body bears,
And my mail is rent in twain;
Darkness hangs before my sight;
Ill my limbs their weight sustain.
Angantyr's enchanted blade
Stings my heart with fatal pain;
Keenly piercing is the point,
Hard, and steep'd in deadly bane."

And then he sung thus:

"Proud domains and palaces
Five I ruled with puissant hand;
Yet I never could abide
Peaceful in my native land.
Hopeless now of light and life

Rest I on a foreign strand,
Here on Samsey's joyless shore
Wounded by the piercing brand.

Seated at the royal board
Many lords of high degree
In the court of Upsala
Quaff the ale with mirth and glee;
Many with the liquor fill'd
On the ground lie heavily;
Me the sword's keen wounds afflict
Circled by the lonely sea.

Youthful beauty's fairest flow'r
Me the monarch's daughter led
To the shore of Agnafit,
Soon a foreign coast to tread.
True I find the fatal words,
Which the parting damsel said;
That I never should return
Blithe to claim her promised bed.

Thence unwilling did I wend
Sever'd from the festive lay,
Which the lovely women sing
East of Sota's spacious bay.
In the swiftly sailing bark
O'er the waves I took my way;
Faithful friends the vessel trimm'd;
Here we sped with short delay.

From my finger draw the ring,
E'en in death my dearest pride;
To the blooming Ingebiorg
Bear it o'er the billows wide.
In her bosom fair and young
Constant sorrow shall abide,
When she hears, I ne'er return
Blithe to claim my promised bride.

O'er the rugged desert wild
East the hungry raven flies;

And behind on stronger wing
Swift the lordly eagle hies.
Soon to glut his hasty rage
Here my feeble body lies;
He will gorge the welling blood,
As I close my dying eyes."

After this died Hialmar and Angantyr. All the brothers were buried there in the island with their weapons; but Oddur bore the dead Hialmar to Sigtuna. Ingebiorg daughter of King Inga would not survive Hialmar, and destroyed herself.

NOTES

ON

THE COMBAT

OF

HIALMAR AND ODDUR

WITH

ANGANTYR AND HIS ELEVEN BROTHERS.

I HAVE followed the old edition of Verelius, containing a tolerably good Swedish version, which has assisted me in making out the most obscure passages; for the Icelandic poetry (which is almost a distinct language from the prose) in style, expression, and obscurity, bears some analogy to the chorusses of the Greek tragedians. I have since collated it with the manuscript in the British Museum, and the later edition, published with a Latin translation at Copenhagen, from various manuscripts, in which the text differs much from that given by Verelius; which, though certainly corrupt in some passages, I have preferred, be-

cause that of the manuscripts used in the Danish edition seems to have been interpolated for the sake of explanation by the transcribers. I have translated the prose very closely; the verse in one or two places is a little amplified, on account of the obscurity of the original, and the shortness of the lines.

P. 71. "*Sam's-ey.*" Or Sams-isle, one of the Danish islands. "Samus Balthica, alias Samsoa; Pontano hist. Dan. pag. 305. Samsoa sive Samus Danica, Saxoni Grammatico, lib. 5. edit. Sorens, p. 93. Sampso, ibid. pag. 366 and 376. Samsa; Danicè Samss-öe; Island. Samsey; Sami insula, est insula amplissima, quæ in mari Balthico situm dilatat, orientali suo litore sinum Codanum et partem Selandiæ insularum Danicarum maximæ, et occiduo Jutiam Borealem exporrigit." *Resenius Sams. ins. descrip. Hafn.* 1675. It was a prevailing custom amongst the warriors of the northern nations to fight their duels in the islands, which abound upon their coasts. The Icelandic word *holmgangr* for a duel appears to be derived from this practice. Holm signifies

an island. In Gunl. Sag. Gunlaug challenges Rafen by these words; "Nu fyrir that vil ek bioda ther *holmgaungu* her a thinginu a thriggia natta fresti i *Auxarar-holmi*." *i. e.* "Now for that will I challenge thee here in the public assembly to single combat at the expiration of three nights in Auxar island."

Hialmar and Hiorvardur one of the sons of Angrim were competitors for the hand of Ingebiorg daughter of king Inga, who resided at Upsala. The princess was attached to Hialmar, but her father, dreading the violence of Angantyr and his brothers, promised her to the strongest; and Hialmar was challenged by Hiorvardur to fight in Sams island. The famous Orvar Oddur was the friend and companion in arms of Hialmar.

P. 71. "*Champions fury*." Berserksgangr. I have ventured to translate Berserker by the English word champions; but there is no term in any language, that can exactly answer to it. These extraordinary people have been called by Latin writers berserki. See

Kristnisaga, *p.* 142. They fought without armour, and were subject to a sort of fury, which was called Berserksgangr. Their name is derived from *ber*, bare, and *serkr*, a garment or coat of mail. The following account of them is given by Snorro Sturleson. "Enn hanns menn foro bryniolauser, &c. *i. e.* "And his (Odin's) men went without coat of mail, and were furious like dogs or wolves, bit their shields, and were strong as bears or bulls; they slaughtered mankind, and neither fire nor steel had power over them. That is called Berserks gangur." *Yngl. Sag. c.* 6. Verelius calls them, "Viri facinorosi, robusti, et bonorum paci graves, quibus iratis vel furore percitis ita intendebantur vires in luctam, pugnas, et cædes, ut postea debiles et languidi fierent." In his Lexicon Scandicum he explains the word berserkr, "Homines robore et animi ferocià aliis omnibus terribiles, qui furore et rabie armati obvia quæque prosternebant, evulsasque radicibus arbores in adversarios suos torquebant. Furore autem isto exhausti cæteris debiliores existebant." It

will be sufficient to quote an account of one of these furious champions from Saxo Grammaticus. " Eâ tempestate Harthbenus quidam ab Helsingiâ veniens, raptas regum filias stupro fœdare gloriæ loco ducebat; illum perimere solitus, a quo peragendæ veneris usu prohiberetur; illustres nuptias humilibus præferens, tantoque se clariorem existimans, quanto splendidiores concubitus per vim assequi potuisset. Nec ultionem effugit, qui se ei comparatione virtutis æquare præsumeret. Tantà verò corporis magnitudine erat, ut novem cubitis proceritatis ejus dimensio tenderetur. Huic duodecim athletæ contubernales fuere, quibus officio erat, quoties illi præsaga pugnæ rabies incessisset, vinculorum remedio oborti furoris impetum propulsare. Ab his Haldanus Harthbenum ejusque pugiles viritim impetere jussus non solùm certamen spopondit, sed etiam victoriam sibi ingenti verborum fiduciâ promisit. Quo audito Harthbenus, repentino furiarum afflatu correptus, summas clypei partes morsûs acerbitate consumpsit, igneos ventri carbones mandare non destitit,

raptas ore prunas in viscerum ima transfudit, crepitantia flammarum pericula percurrit; ad postremum, omni sævitiæ genere debacchatus, in sex athletarum suorum præcordia furenti manu ferrum convertit. Quam insaniam illi pugnandi aviditas an naturæ ferocitas attulit, incertum est. Haldanum deinde residuâ pugilum manu petivit." *Saxo, lib.* 7. This troublesome race was so plentiful in the North before the establishment of the Christian religion, that circumstances of the same nature are related in almost every old Icelandic work; and it is stated in Grettis saga, c. 21, that earl Eric banished all such men from his dominions in Norway, "giordi alla berserki utlæga ur Noregi." It appears, that, however desirous, they had not the power of resisting the paroxysm of rage; for, in a passage quoted by Bartholinus from Vatnzdæla saga, Thorer laments, that he is subject to it, and asks the advice and assistance of his brother to prevent it. By the heathens they were supposed to be under the influence of witchcraft, and the first Christians in the

North thought them possessed by devils. It is related in Eyrbyggia saga, that Thrander was subject to the fury, whilst he was a heathen, but that it quitted him (as generally was the case) after he had been baptized. These accounts are singular, and indeed we meet with nothing similar to this extraordinary phrenzy in the history of any other people, unless it be the Malays; but there cannot be the least doubt of their authenticity. The various histories agree in stating, that, during the access of rage, the force of these champions was irresistible, and almost supernatural; but that afterwards they were sick and weak, like men exhausted by violent illness. See *Egills saga*, and *Eyrb. sag.* Many of them are described, as mild and affable in their general demeanor, unless suddenly thwarted or contradicted. It appears to me, that this temporary madness was merely the violent eruption of a savage disposition, amongst men undisciplined and untam..d; whose limbs had been invigorated by the practice of every corporeal exertion; who from their habits of life and their reli-

gion were entirely devoid of fear, from earliest youth had been accustomed to constant warfare and pillage, and had known no controul, but their own will, no bound to their desires, but the impossibility of gratifying them. If I may apply to this subject the sublime poetry of Guidi,

"Ardea su l' alma a i chiari duci——
Sdegno regale, e bellicoso ardire,
E quel fatal desire
Di sempre incatenar regni ed eroi;
E così i figli suoi
Vide ———— la stirpe altera
Tanto infiammarsi alla stagion guerriera."

The following singular story is related of Eric king of Denmark, in which it appears, that he was seized with a fury not unlike that of the Berserci; in consequence of which he vowed to undertake an expedition to the holy land, and died at Cyprus, according to Holberg in 1105. "One day, when he was sitting at table and carousing with his friends, a musician was announced, who boasted, that he could

sway the passions of all men, as he chose, by the sound of his harp. The king ordered him to enter, and make the experiment; but the musician excused himself for a long time, saying, that it would cause the king to lose his reason. This refusal served only to awaken their curiosity still more, so that he was compelled to play by fear of punishment. When the musician found, that the king was positive in his commands, he first requested, that the king's servants would shut up all the arms and weapons, which were in the hall. When this was done, and the doors locked, he began to strike the harp. The first piece, he played, had this effect, that the whole court became very sorrowful and melancholy; the second roused them all to mirth, so that they sprang up and danced; but at the third they all became furious. In this moment of rage the king broke open a closet, and seized a sword, with which he slew four of his ministers; and his attendants were forced to throw themselves upon him, and hold him forcibly, till the fury had sub-

sided." See *Holbergs Dannemarks Riges Historie*, 1. 198. This circumstance is told more at length by Saxo Grammaticus, *lib.* 12.

P. 73. "*Odin's hall.*" The slain in battle were supposed to go to the residence of Odin, which was called Val-hall, the hall of the slain. Odin was frequently called Valfodur, the father of the slain. To go to the hall of Odin is a common expression for to die in battle, as in the song of Erind Skaldaspiller called Hakonarmal, "Hver Yngva ættar Skylldi meth Othni fara I Valhöll at vera." *i. e.* "Which of the descendants of Yngua should go to abide with Odin in Valhalla." Those, who were about to fall in battle, were invited to Valhalla either by Odin himself, or by the Valkyriæ, the virgins of slaughter, who were deputed for that purpose. For a fuller account of this see Bartholinus's excellent book *De Causis contemptæ a Danis adhuc gentilibus Mortis*, *L.* 2. *c.* 11. Snorro in his Edda says, that "Odin is called Alfodur, because he is father of all the Gods; he is also called Valfodur,

because his chosen sons are those, who fall in the slaughter of battle. To them he assigns Valhalla." *Gör. Edd. p.* 36.

P. 74. "*Tirfing.*" The sword of Angantyr. I have here subjoined a translation of the second and third chapters of Hervarar Saga, which contain the history of this sword.—"At this time came from the east men of Asia and Turks, and settled in the north. Odin their leader had many sons, and they were all great men and powerful. One of his sons was called Sigurlami. To him Odin gave Gardarike (a part of Russia), and he was ruler over it. He espoused Heidi the daughter of Gylfa; they had a son, who was called Svafurlami. Sigurlami fell in battle, when he fought with the Jotun Thiassa. Now, when Svafurlami heard the fall of his father, he undertook to govern all that empire, which his father had possessed, and was very powerful. It happened one day, that Svafurlami rode out to the chase, and sought long for a hart, but came not within reach of one the wholo day, before the sun

was set. He had then rode so far in the forest, that he knew not where his home was. A hill was on his right hand; there he saw two dwarfs. He drew his sword against them, and chased them out from the stones. They prayed to ransom their lives, and he asked their names; and one was named Dyren, and the other Dualin. He knew, that they were the most skilful artificers amongst the dwarfs, and he bound them to this, that they should make him the best sword, they could. They were to make the hilt and the handle also of gold; the sheath and fastening of the belt of gold. He stipulated, that the sword should never miss its stroke, and never suffer from rust; that it should cleave iron and stones even as a garment, and give victory in battle and single combat to whoever bore it. This was the ransom of their lives. On the appointed day they came; the dwarfs gave him the sword; and, as Dualin stood at the entrance, he said; "Thy sword shall be the bane of man, whenever it is drawn; and with it shall be performed three most atro-

cious deeds; it shall also be thy bane." Svafurlami struck at the dwarfs with the sword, and the blade clove the stones. Svafurlami possessed this sword, and called it Tirfing; he bore it in battle and in single combat. He felled the giant Thiassa in single combat, and took his daughter, who was called Frydur. They had a child, whose name was Eyvor, a maiden beautiful and wise.

Now be it told, that the champion Angrym was upon an expedition of pillage, and led out with him many soldiers. He layed waste the kingdom of Svafurlami, and fought with him, and they contended with alternate blows. Svafurlami struck a part of the shield of Angrym, and the sword was wedged in by the blow. Then Angrym brandished his sword at the hand of Svafurlami, and cut it off. Angrym then seized Tirfing, and with it struck and felled Svafurlami. He afterwards took considerable booty and his daughter Eyvor. They had twelve sons. 1. Angantyr was the eldest. 2. Hervardr. 3. Hiorvardr. 4. Se-

mingr. 5. Hrani. 6. Brani. 7. Barri. 8. Reitaer. 9. Tiundur. 10. Bui. 11. two Haddingers. Both these performed only one man's work; Angantyr was equal to two; he was a head taller, than any of them. They were all mighty champions, and superior to others in strength and valor. They went wide about the country to plunder, and were all victorious and far renowned. Angantyr possessed Tirfing, Semingr Misteltein, and Hiorvardr Hrotta; each of them had a capital sword for single combat. It was their custom, when they were alone with their men, if they found the fury *(berserksgangr)* come on, to go up into the country, and fight with stones or trees. It has happened to them unintentionally to slay their own men, and destroy their ship. So tidings went abroad concerning them." See *Hervarar Saga, Verel. p.* 37, *&c.*

The death of Hialmar is placed by Suhm in the year 410. The real name of the Odin here mentioned was Hugleik; he flourished at the end of the third and be-

ginning of the fourth century, and was called Angul, because he established his dominion over the Anglo-Saxons in south Jutland; where he also acquired the name of Odin, whose religion he introduced amongst them. It was a common superstition amongst the northern nations to imagine, that the souls of their most eminent leaders revisited the earth and animated new bodies, and from this notion he has been confounded by the authors of Hervarar saga, Vegtam's quida, and other works, with the older Odin, from whom he was descended. He subdued the greater part of Jutland, and contended even with Frode the third for the crown of Denmark; but he found a powerful enemy in Hoder, by whom his son Balder was killed after a long contest. After this misfortune his influence was much diminished, and he retired with his adherents into Russia, where he espoused Rinda, and acquired considerable power.

P. 77. "*Afflict.*" In the Swedish edition it is thessari; but the right reading is thia, from ek thiae, I afflict.

P. 77. "*Agnafit.*" The spot, where Stockholm now

stands. "Agnafit, lingula terræ ad Mælerum lacum Sueciæ, quam Olaus sanctus freto Kongsund hodie dicto perfodiebat." *M.S. Lex. in the British Museum.*

Saint Olave, who reigned over Norway in the eleventh century, sailed with his fleet through Stocksound, and plundered the coast of the Swedish lake without opposition; but on his return he found the narrow passage completely blocked up by his enemies. In this dilemma he resolved to cut his way during the night through the narrow neck of land, called Agnafit: the waters of the lake, which were swollen by rain, assisted him in opening a channel, through which he made his escape; and on the next morning the Swedes, who had thought themselves certain of their prey, had the mortification of seeing the Norwegian fleet in the Baltic. See *Mallings St. og G. Handl. p.* 282.

P. 78. "*Sota.*" Part of the Swedish coast so called from Sote a famous pirate, who was defeated there by king Olaus.

P. 78. "*Faithful friends, &c.*" The reading in the

Swedish edition is corrupt. "Mesta sinni med holvinum." That given in the Copenhagen edition is probably right; "Hinsta sinni med holvinum," *i. e.* for the last time with true friends. There is a similar expression in the lamentation of Starkader; "Adr færi ek Hinsta sinni til Haurdalands," *i. e.* "Before I went for the last time to Hordaland;" and in Holmveria saga,

"Thu hefir hingat i seinsta sinni
Feigum fotum folld sporada."

i. e. For the last time hast thou here
Trod the ground with fated feet.

In the M.S. of Hervarar saga in the British Museum the line stands thus, Fyrsta sinni fra holvinum, *i. e.* for the first time from my true friends.

P. 79. "*Sigtuna.*" This was the spot, where Odin first established himself in Sweden and built a temple, on the side of the great lake Mœleren. "Sigtun betyder Siges bolig, &c." *i. e.* "Sigtun signifies the abode or place of Sige; from which it may be readily conclud-

ed, that Odin's right name was Sigge, which is given to him in the Edda amongst many others." *Suhms Hist. af Dan.* 1. 35.

P. 79. "*Destroyed herself.*" The particulars of the death of Ingebiorg are related in the 31st chapter of Orvar Odds saga, where it is stated, that, when Oddur arrived with the body of Hialmar, and presented the ring to her, she was working a garment for Hialmar. The news of his death shocked her so violently, that she fell back, and instantly expired. Oddur raised her up and smiled, saying, that he rejoiced, that those were coupled in death, who were prevented from uniting in life. They were buried in one tomb at Upsala.

THE

SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

OF

SOGU THATTUR AF ALFE KONGE OG RECKUM HANNS,

CONTAINING

THE SONG OF HROKE THE BLACK.

From the old Icelandic in Biörner's Nordiska Kämpa datter.

1803.

Hroke the black was at the court of king Haco; Brynhilda was Haco's daughter. King Swein the victorious had been a suitor to Brynhilda, but rejected by Haco. Swein made a vow to destroy the man, who should marry Brynhilda, and her father also. Vifill, the son of Hiedin one of king Haco's earls, asked for the hand of Brynhilda, and it was promised to him on condition, that he should defend the realm against Swein. Hroke the black was unknown, and therefore he was received without honor, and seated

amongst the strangers. It happened one day, when the court was employed in the chase, and the women gathering nuts, that Brynhilda beheld a man of large stature standing against an oak tree, and heard him sing thus:

" By Hamund's son now be it told,
That two we were in battle bold;
Greater was our father's fame,
Mightier, than thy Haco's name.
Let Vifill be to none preferr'd,
Of those, who wait on Hamund's herd!
Never swine-herd saw I there
Mean of soul, as Hiedin's heir.
Happier was my active fate,
When I follow'd Alfur great.
In war united did we stand,
And haried each surrounding land.
Dauntless warriors then we led,
Where glory crowns the valiant head;

Haried, pillaged. Icel. heriade, from *her*, an army.

In polish'd helmets did we shine,
Roaming through mighty regions nine.
In either hand without his shield
The sword I've seen the monarch wield;
Nor warrior lived, or near, or wide,
With stouter heart and nobler pride.
Yet some have said, who little wiss'd,
Haleyga's lord all reason miss'd.
I never saw the valiant king
Lack, what prudent counsels bring.
He bade his warriors never quail,
Nor in pain of death bewail;
None beneath his banners wait,
Save who embraced their leader's fate;
None groan upon the battle's ground,
Though pierced and gall'd by many a wound;
Nor pause to bind the sores, that burn,
Before the morning sun's return;
None afflict the captive foe,
Nor work the matron's shame and woe;

Maidens chaste their honor hold,
Ransom'd by their parents' gold.
Never bark, though stoutly mann'd,
Garr'd us fly the hostile band;
Small our force, but firm and good,
One against eleven stood.
Where'er we moved in arm'd array,
To conquest still he led the way;
No chief so swift to wield the sword,
Save Sigurd famed at Giuka's board.
Warriors many, good and proud,
Did to the monarch's vessel crowd;
Bork, and Bryniulf's hardy might;
Bolverk, Haco fierce in fight;
Eigill was there, and Erling young,
Wighty sons of Aslac strong.
Foremost of the martial crew
Alf and my brother Hroke I knew;
Styr and Steinar did I ken,
Sons of Gunlad, warlike men.

Garr'd, made. *Wighty*, stout, active.

Hring and Halfdan bravely stood,
Right-judging Danes, and Dag the proud;
Stare, and Steingrim, Stafe, and Gaut;
Doughtier would be vainly sought.
Vale, and Hauk, sea-rovers bold,
Did to our monarch firmly hold.
Champions more sturdy, than the twain,
Few live in Haco's wide domain.
Nor I amid that warlike race
Did e'er my father's arm disgrace;
They said, none earn'd a higher name,
For each upheld his comrade's fame.
Woe worth Vemund, who did slay
Bersé and Biorn upon a day,
Before the king, who boldly train'd
His dauntless troops, while life remain'd.
That precious life was not preserv'd,
Long, as fearless deeds deserv'd;
Scarce twelve years old he first gan fight,
Just thirty on the fatal night.

'Tis this, which gars me little sleep,
And watchful bids me nightly weep;
Still mindful of my brother's fate,
Burnt alive with Alfur great.
Of all the hours, that mortals know,
This caused me heaviest deepest woe;
Taught since then by angry Heav'n
To follow friendly counsel giv'n.
Vengeance for my fallen king,
Alone can joy and comfort bring;
If I through Asmund's recreant heart
Might drive the sword, or piercing dart.
Vengeance for Alfur brave be ta'en,
Deceived in peace, and foully slain!
Murder was wrought in evil hour
By treacherous Asmund's baneful pow'r.
Mine the task in arms to prove,
When Swein and I to battle move,
Which is most in combat brave,
Hamund's son, or Haco's slave.

Gar, Icel. giöra, or gera; Swed. göra; Dan. giöre; Cornish, gurey: facere.

Thus have I sung to maiden fair;
Thus to Brynhilda love declare:
If Hroke, great Hamund's son, might know,
That she to him would favor shew.
Hope should I have, if we were join'd,
Warriors wise and bold to find;
For maid more peerless, well I ween,
Than Haco's daughter, ne'er was seen;
With every charm and virtue fraught,
That e'er my youthful wishes sought.
Now seem I here unknown to stand
A nameless wight in Haco's land;
Higher rank his vassals hold,
Than the kemps of Alfur bold."

Kemps, warriors.

NOTES

ON

THE SONG OF HROKE THE BLACK.

SUHM in his Hist. af Danm. bears testimony to the merit and antiquity of the song of Hroke the black. "This song, which is found in Alfs saga, is very excellent: and, as it is quite simple and historical, I am of opinion, that it is very old; perhaps even composed by Hroke himself." *v.* 1. *p.* 409. King Alf or Alfur was killed in 585. Hroke afterwards married Brynhilda, overthrew and killed Swein the victorious, and in company with Utstein revenged the death of Alf, by slaying Asmund in battle. Haco was king of Scania, and Swein the victorious ruled over the Danish island Fyen.

V. 22. "*Haleyga.*" Haleyga, Helgeland, or Halogaland, so called from the old king Haloge, was the

north-western coast of Norway, including all Norland. Trondhiem and Nummedal were sometimes comprehended under the name. Alf was not properly king of Helgeland, but of Rogaland and Hordaland, in the neighbourhood of what is now Hardanger; but he invaded Helgeland, and probably conquered a part of it. See *Schön. Norsk. Hist.* 1. 315. and 333. Hiorleif the father of Alf was king of Hordaland and Rogaland, and conquered Seeland from king Reidar. See *Alfs Saga*, c. 5. and 8.

V. 44. "*Sigurd.*" Sigurd Sigmundsson, surnamed Fafnisbana. He married the daughter of Giuka, (a Saxon prince, whose dominions were situated on the southern bank of the Rhine,) and defended his territory against Sigurd Hring king of Denmark. See *Norna Gesters saga*, c. 6. *Torfæus Ser. R. D.* 337. *Volsunga saga*, c. 33. and the unpublished historical odes in *Sæmund's Edda.*

V. 52. Hroke the white.

V. 67. "*Vemund.*" He was the standard-bearer

of king Alf. See *Alfs Saga*, c. 10. I believe, the circumstances of the death of Bersé and Biorn are not known; they were two of Alf's warriors.

V. 78. "*Burnt alive.*" By Asmund, who treacherously invited them to a feast, and having set fire to the house, attacked those, who attempted to escape.

V. 82. "*Friendly counsel.*" This probably alludes to the advice of Innstein, who had warned them of the snare, but was disregarded. He was killed, as well as Hroke the white, by the side of king Alf. The following lines are translated from his dying song in the 13th chapter of Alfs saga.

Hroke is slain by Alfur's side,
Swift of foot, the army's pride.
Ill hath Odin's power decreed,
Which bade so good a monarch bleed.
Eighteen years to dye the sword
Follow'd I that generous lord;
Other king I ne'er will have,
Nor live to seek a peaceful grave.

To earth shall Innstein's faithful head
Bow, where his valiant monarch bled.
This let men in story tell,
That good king Alfur smiling fell.

Alfs Saga contains many other stanzas in the same simple style, and of equal antiquity.

V. 94. "*Hæco's slave.*" Vifill, who had promised to defend the kingdom against Swein.

THE

DEATH OF HACON,

A. D. 963.

From the old Icelandic by Evind Skaldaspiller.

1803.

Gondul and Skogul swiftly flew,
To chuse from Yngva's boasted blood
What king should wend, with heroes slain
To dwell in Odin's rich abode.

Unmail'd beneath his banner bright
They saw Biorn's valiant brother stand;
The javelins flew; the foemen fell;
The storm of war gan shake the land.

The army's lord had warn'd the isles;
The bane of earls, stout Denmark's dread,
With gallant suite of northmen bold
High rear'd his eagle-crested head.

The king of men (before he hied
To stir the war with fearless might)
To ground his iron mail had cast,
The cumbrous harness of the fight.

He sported with his noble train,
When roused to guard his native land;
Joyful beneath the golden helm
Now did the dauntless monarch stand.

His glittering brand the hauberks clove,
As if it fell on liquid waves;
The falchions clash'd; the bucklers broke;
The armour sung beneath the glaives *.

Keen burn'd the swords in bleeding wounds;
Long axes bow'd the struggling host;
Loud echoing rang the bossy shields;
Fast rain'd the darts on Storda's coast.

* *The seventh stanza is omitted; see the notes.*

Behind the buckler warriors bled;
In fight they joy'd from thirst of gold:
Hot flow'd the blood in Odin's storm;
The stream of blades whelm'd soldiers bold.

With helmets cleft, and actons pierced,
The arm'd chiefs rested on the plain;
Ah! little thought that valiant host
To reach the palace of the slain.

Couching her lance quoth Gondul fair;
"The crew of heaven be now encreas'd;
Stout Hacon with his countless host
Is bidden hence to Odin's feast."

The monarch heard the fatal words,
The steel-clad maids of slaughter bore;
All thoughtful on their steeds they sate,
And held their glittering shields before.

" Why thus" (he said) " the war divide?
From Heaven we merit victory!"
" Thy force" (quoth Skogul) " we upheld,
We bade thy mighty foemen fly.

Fair sisters," (cried the virgin bright)
Ride we to heaven's immortal domes!
Hear, Odin! Lo, to grace thy court
The king of men, the victor, comes."

" Haste, Braga, and Hermoder, haste!
To meet the chief" (quoth Odin) " go!
Hither he wends, whose sturdy arm
Has wrought full many a champion woe."

From war return'd, the battle won,
His limbs shed fast a gory stream;
" Odin," (he cried) " fierce Lord of death,
Thy fell decrees full savage seem!"

" The peace of heroes shalt thou have;
Quaff with the Gods the sparkling beer!
Proud bane of earls," (great Braga said)
" Eight valiant brothers hast thou here."

" Our arms" (the generous king replied)
" These warworn hands shall never yield:
Helmet and mail be well preserv'd;
'Tis good the trusty blade to wield."

Then was it known, that Hacon's hand
Due offerings to each Power had giv'n;
Who to their blissful seats was hail'd
By all the glorious host of heav'n.

Hallow'd the day, and famed the year,
That bore a king so largely loved!
His memory be for ever saved,
And bless'd the land, on which he moved!

Fenris the wolf from Hell unchain'd
On mortals shall his fury pour,
Ere monarch great and good, as he,
Visit this desolated shore.

Wealth perishes, and kindred die;
Desert grows every hill and dale:
With heathen Gods let Hacon sit,
And melancholy swains bewail!

NOTES

ON

THE DEATH OF HACON.

THIS ode, which is called Hâconharmal, was written immediately after the death of king Hacon, in 963, by his bard Evind Skaldaspiller, and is deservedly esteemed one of the most beautiful relicks of Northern poetry; for there is an inimitable harmony in the original lines. It is preserved entire in Heimskringla. An English prose translation from the Latin version of Peringskiöld has been published by Dr. Percy in his Runic poetry, which is not quite so inaccurate, as the rest of that book: his translation of Regner Lodbroc's ode teems with *

* The geographical errors are particularly singular. "Processimus ad terram prostratorum," (*i. e.* the field of slaughter,) is there translated, "We marched to the land of Vals;" and, "In Skioldungorum prælio," "At Skioldunga." The Skioldungi were in fact the descendants of Skiold, king of Denmark.

errors, and indeed scarce a line of it is properly interpreted. Mr. Johnstone has had the merit of publishing the original text of that ode more accurately, than Worm or Biörner, with an English and Latin prose version, in which he has rectified many of Dr. Percy's errors, though his style is very indifferent: for instance, the last line, "Lægiandi skall eg deyia," (which is simply, *smiling shall I die)* he has translated, "The smiles of death compose my placid countenance;" and, "Vultu subridens moriar." There is however a celebrated passage in Regner's ode, which has been completely misunderstood by all its translators.

"Varat um eina ottu
Olldum tharf at flya
Hilldar-leik, thar er hvassir
Hialm-tun bitu skiolmar.
Varat sem unga ekkiu
I öndveige kyssa."

"Erat circa matutinum tempus
Hominibus necessum erat fugere
Ex prælio, ubi acutè

Cassidis campos mordebant gladii.
Erat hoc veluti juvenem viduam
In primariâ sede osculari." *Worm. Literatura* Runica.*

And in another stanza,

" Varat sem biarta brude
I bing hia sier leggia."

" Erat sicut splendidam virginem
In lecto juxta se collocare." *Ib.*

" It was about the time of the morning, when the foe was compelled to fly in the battle. There the sword sharply bit the polished helmets. The pleasure of that day, was like kissing a young widow at the highest seat of the table." *Percy's Runic poetry.*

" The pleasure of that day was like having a fair virgin placed beside one in the bed." *Ib.*—" The sight was pleasing to my heart, as when my blooming bride I seated by me in the chair of state." *Johnstone.*

What notion the learned translators entertained of kissing young widows, I cannot pretend to say; but it is singular, that they should have imagined, Regner

* This is an inaccurate title; *Runer*, from which is formed the adjective *runic*, is simply the Icelandic word for letters, literature, or charms wrought by means of letters.

Lodbroc could have thought it like breaking heads with a broadsword. The fact is, that the lines mean the very reverse. *At*, added to an Icelandic verb, has the force of a negative, and is frequently used. *Var* means was; *varat*, was not. *Otta* is the earliest morning, when the cock crows, before sunrise; or more accurately, three hours after midnight. See *Torfæi Vinlandia*, and *Jenssön's Norske Glosebog*. The lines ought to have been thus rendered. "It was not early in the morning, when men were compelled to fly from the sport of battle, where sharp swords bit the surface of the helmets. This was not like kissing a young widow in the highest seat." By which he meant, that they had a long and hard contest, and that the sport of war was very different from the pleasures of peace. The other lines contain the same negative. There is a passage in Fridthiofes saga, which will illustrate these. Fridthiofe, who carried on a secret amour with the sister of his enemy Baldur, being forced to fly, is overtaken at sea by a violent tempest;

and, after describing the force of the waves and the miseries of a seafaring life, he adds,

" Er ei sąm biarta brudi
I Balldurs haga kyssum;"

i. e. It is not like kissing the fair maid in the abode of Baldur:—and shortly after his companion says,

" Erat sem eckia	Sollt ero augu
A thig vilie drecka,	Syckut i laugu,
Biort baugvara	Bilsterka arma
Bidie nær fara;	Bytur mer i hvarma."

" Non est, ut si vidua tibi vellet propinare, vel splendidus comitatus nuptialis te socium invitaret; madet mihi oculus salsâ et tepidâ aquâ; exercitium brachiorum fortium palpebras dolere facit." *Biörner in Frid. sag. p.* 17.

V. 1. " *Gondul and Skogul.*" Two of the Valkyriæ or virgins of slaughter, whom Odin dispatches from Valhalla to invite the principal warriors, who are about to fall in battle. See the notes on the combat of Hialmar, &c. p. 89. The invitation from Odin was only sent to the most distinguished chieftains, and at other times (as is stated in the Fatal sisters) " the Val-

kyriæ possess the option of slaughter, Eiga Valkyriur vals um kosti." *st.* 6.

V. 5. "*Unmail'd.*" Or bryniu., It was not unusual for the leaders to fight without coat of mail or shield, for the purpose of shewing their contempt of danger, and enjoying the free use of their limbs. But there is another reading, *i bryniu*, in his coat of mail; which is confirmed by the line, "Hialm og brynio skal hirda vel, Helmet and mail be well preserved."

V. 9. "*Isles.*" In Schöning's edition it stands, "Het a Holmrygi, sa er her kallar;" *i. e.* He, that summons the army, had warned the inhabitants of the islands belonging to the province of Rogaland. In Peringskiöld's, "Het a Haleygi, sems a Holmrygi;" *i. e.* He warned the inhabitants of Halogaland, as well as the islands, &c.

V. 12. "*Eagle-crested.*" Und ar hialmi. The word *ar* has various significations. Schöning has translated it *maturè*. In that sense it is the root of the English word *early*. Peringskiold translates it

aquilino signo notabili, from *are**, an eagle. *Ar* (with which the Latin word *ara* is probably connected) signifies also fire, (see *Gudm. Andreas,)* and I am inclined to think Ar hialmi means here a glittering helmet. A subsequent line says, that he stood "Und gull hialmi," under a golden helmet.

V. 24. I have omitted a whole stanza after this line, because it is superfluous; and the two first lines, if not corrupt, are so obscure, that they have never been properly interpreted.

Trauddoz taurgnr fyrir tys og banga
Hialta hardfótom hausi Nordmanna;
Roma vard i eyio; rudo kongar
Skirar skialdborgir i skatna blodi. *Per. edit.* 1,164.

The two last lines are very plain. "The conflict was in the island; the princes stained the bright edges of

* From *are* I believe our word *eyrie* is derived; Johnson derives it from *ey*, an egg; properly *ei*, German: but I do not believe, there is a word in the English language (unless very modern) of German origin, and the Germans have no word to express *eyrie*, which in French is spelt *aire*. In Anglo Sax. *æg* is an egg; in Icel. *egg*; in Galic *ubh*, or *ugh*. *Ey* is an island in Icel. The words, which we have in common with the Germans, are not borrowed from them, but drawn from a higher source.

the shields in the blood of nobles." But the two first have been variously explained. "Tyri (*i. e.* Martis) et Bogonis arma conculcabantur præ duris tegumentis induto Norvægicorum cranio." *Peringskiold.* "Concussa sunt scuta, viri regis, et duro gladii mucrone, crania Nordmannorum." *Schöning*, who reads hauser, instead of hausi. Dr. Percy, who followed Peringskiold, asserts, that Bauga was a subordinate god of war; but no such person is mentioned in either Edda, and I can find no account of him. I believe, that Peringskiold, who was puzzled by the word, got rid of the difficulty by translating it Bogonis, and that Bogo was deified by the learned bishop. The words cannot bear the construction or meaning given to them by Schöning. It does not appear, whether he takes hialta to be the gen. plur. of hialt, the hilt of a sword, or the gen. sing. of hialte, a hero; but it seems to have served him for both. If I may venture to propose a new interpretation, I should arrange the words thus. "Taurgur tys og bauga trauddoz fyrir hialta hardfotom hausi Nordmanna. Scuta Tyri (*i. e.* bellica) et

annulorum (*i. e.* rotunda, vel annulis munita) conculcabantur ante virum duripedem caput (*i. e.* ducem) Nordmannorum." Tyr was the God of war. Baugr, a ring, signifies in poetry any thing circular; and is sometimes used to express a shield, either on account of its form, or of the rings, by which it was attached to the arm. See *Nials saga*, and *Edda Sæm. p.* 306. I should therefore prefer reading the nom. plur. baugar, in which case the interpretation would be, Scuta bellica et clypei; but at any rate shields of rings, for shields adorned with or in the shape of rings, is a usual form of expression in Icelandic. The introduction of words between the preposition and its substantive is not unfrequent, nor does it here produce any confusion, as fyrir never governs a genitive case.

V. 32. "*Storda.*" A small island on the coast of Norway.

V. 57. "*Braga and Hermoder.*" Braga was the God of poetry. Hermoder was the son of Odin, who was sent on the embassy to redeem his brother Balder from hell. See *Gör. Edda, p.* 85.

V. 81. " *Fenris the wolf.*" He was son of the mischievous Loke, and so formidable to the Asi on account of his strength and ferocity, that they contrived to bind him with a chain of materials, which could not be broken. He revenged himself by biting off the hand of Tyr; but his chain will not be loosed, till the twilight of the Gods, when Fenris will break forth, and devour Odin. See *Gör. Edda, p.* 53. *and* 91.

V. 85. " This line will be found also in Havamal.

V. 87. " *Heathen Gods.*" Heidin God. When this ode was written, the Christian religion was beginning to spread into Norway. King Hacon was the son of Harald Harfager, and had been educated in England at the court of king Athelstan, where he was instructed in the Christian faith. See *Torf. Hist. Norv.* and *Pontop. Gest. Dan.* 2. 69. He was attacked in the island of Storda by the sons of his brother Eric, whom he had driven from the throne of Norway. With very inferior forces he gained a complete victory, but in the pursuit he was struck by an arrow, and died afterwards of his wound.

THE

COMMENCEMENT

OF

BIARKAMAL.

A fragment printed in Heimskringla, in Bartholinus Ant. Dan. and in Stephanius's notes on Saxo Grammaticus.

1803.

THE day has dawn'd; the plumed helms sound;
'Tis time to tread the battle's ground.
Wake and ay wake each friendly head,
The latest prop of Adils dead!
Strong Har, and Hrolf, whose darts ne'er fail,
Men nobly born, who never quail,
For wine, or women wake ye not!
Wake for the battle's hardy lot!

* * * *

NOTES

ON

BIARKAMAL.

THESE lines are stated by Schöning (*Norsk. Hist.* 1. 322 and 468. and *Heimskr.* 2. 347) to have been composed in the sixth century by Bodvar Biarke, one of Hrolf Krake's warriors, and were the commencement of a famous Icelandic song called Biarkamal from his name. The rest of the original, except a few lines, is now lost; but Saxo Grammaticus has given a Latin imitation of it in his history. It is a dialogue between Biarke and Hialto, on the fatal night, in which they were treacherously killed by the Swedes together with Hrolf Krake and all the rest of his warriors. Saxo's translation is very free, and varies also in not mentioning any names, and stating, that it was

night, not morning. It seems to have been admitted, that Biarke himself was the author of this spirited poem; but, as it must in that case have been composed the very night, on which he was surprised and killed with all his companions, I do not understand, how, if they had been his lines, they could have been preserved. I am inclined to believe, that they were composed by some other poet after his death, and have since been attributed to him, because a great part of it is supposed to be spoken by him; as Havamal has for the same reason been esteemed the work of Odin.

Adils was the son of Ottar king of Sweden, whom he succeded; his principal residence was Upsala. See *Yngl. Saga, c.* 32. and *Hrolf Krakes Saga, c.* 14. He was dead at the time, when these lines are said to have been written; and had before his death been hostile to Hrolf, whose mother he had married.

V. 2. "*It is time, &c.*" Mal er vilmogum. Bartholinus translates vilmogum, milites; Schöning, ser-

vis; Stephanius, Vili filiis, *i. e.* Suecis; and Peringskiold omits the word in his translation, as I have done. I am inclined to think, that Stephanius was right, and that the first lines were supposed to be spoken, before the attack, by the Swedes; who might properly be called the followers of Adils, their late monarch. In Hrolf Krakes saga his champions are enumerated, but the name of Har does not occur amongst them. Hrolf Krake was killed in 552.

END OF PART FIRST.

PRINTED BY I. GOLD, SHOE LANE.

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

THE GERMAN, DANISH, &c.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

MISCELLANEOUS POETRY.

by
Wm. Herbert

Giace, tra l'alto fiume e la palude,
Picciol sentier nell' arenosa riva.

ARIOSTO. 15. 49.

London:

PRINTED FOR T. REYNOLDS, OXFORD-STREET;
BY I. GOLD, SHOE LANE.

1804.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE ballad of Lenardo and Blandina is translated from the German of Bürger, who is well known in this country, as author of Leonora. The tale is similar to that of Guiscard and Sigismunda in Dryden, but the style and character of this ballad is very different from that of the English fable; and it is perhaps singular, that Bürger, who copied much from our language, should not in this instance have borrowed from Dryden's excellent poem. The story is found in Boccaccio. The first part of the ballad is heavy, and very inferior to the rest; and on that account I have not printed the first 128 lines, which would have been tedious. They contain little poetical beauty, and the story may be comprised in a few words.—Blandina, a beautiful Princess of Burgundy, having rejected many suitors of high rank and character, becomes enamored of her page Lenardo. She is even less scrupulous, than Sigismunda; and takes the earliest opportunity of declar-

ing to him the fondness, which her looks had already betrayed, by means of a letter artfully concealed within an apple, in which she desires him to meet her at midnight under the tree, whence it was culled. The page, who appears throughout to have been a great coward, hesitates at first; but, when midnight sounds the summons of love, he springs from his couch, and repairs quickly to the tree, whence he is conducted without further ceremony by the Princess to a vaulted chamber in an ancient ruin, which she had chosen for her summer bower.

'Tis midnight, and sleep overshadows the sight,
But the eye of the traitor sleeps not in the night.
Lenardo! Lenardo! beware of thy way,
Ere yet the cock hails the first dawning of day!

A Spanish Prince, who had been an unsuccessful suitor to Blandina, but still lingered at the court of Burgundy, happened that night to be solacing himself with a starlight walk, and observed the lovers. He immediately gave the alarm; and the old father, distracted

with fury, accompanied him to the door of the passage leading to the vaulted chamber, where a lamp shone faintly.—I have not attempted in this translation to copy the manner of the old English ballads, which has been adopted by some of Bürger's translators; because the German poetry has very little resemblance to it. The mad song of Blandina bears strong marks of the corrupt taste of Germany, and perhaps it should have been omitted.

The four odes from Gesner, which I have imitated, are printed amongst his Idylls. I have subjoined a Greek version of another by Mr. W. Frere. This is all the German poetry by Gesner, that I have seen; and I believe he did not publish any more, which is much to be regretted.

A volume, entitled Syr Launcelot, &c. (which I understand has been published by a gentleman bearing the same name with myself) having been attributed by *several* persons to me, I beg leave to disclaim all knowledge of that work, which I have not even seen.

1803. *W. HERBERT.*

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ERRATA.

Page 14. line 11. *for* grean *read* green
—— 31. —— 15. *after* and *insert* a comma.
—— 61. —— 24. *for* unshakled *read* unshackled.

LENARDO AND BLANDINA.

From the German by Bürger.

1801.

* * * * * *

THE old monarch listens, and pausing he hears
The voice of the lovers just reaching his ears.
With kisses soft-glowing each other they press,
With love breathing words, and with tender caress.
"My darling! my darling! what troubles thy mind?
To thee my fond bosom faith ever shall bind.
Thy princess by day, but in night's secret shade
Here may'st thou command me, thine own loving maid."
"O beautiful princess! O wert thou to me
The humblest of maids of the humblest degree,
My bosom would meet thee with rapture and joy;
But love is now blended with anxious alloy."

"My sweetest! my sweetest! ne'er heed what they say!
I am not thy princess by night or by day.
For the lap of sweet love will I barter the throne,
My father's rich empire, his sceptre, and crown."
"O fairest of fairest! O couldst thou but prove
Thus tender for ever, thus constant in love!
Some prince, or rich baron, from far, or from near,
Will woo thee, and win thee, and make thee forswear.
The wind quickly rises, the water swells high;
But the winds pass away, and the waters flow by:
And woman's fond love is like water and wind;
So it flows, so it passes away from the mind."
"Let them woo me, and woo me, from far, and from near,
No baron, no prince shall e'er make me forswear.
My dearest! my dearest! so sure will I prove
Thus tender for ever, thus constant in love.
Like wind and like water my fondness you'll find;
Fast flows by the water, fast passes the wind;
Yet ne'er will all pass, nor will all flow away:

So my love will flow ever, nor yet pass away."

"O beautiful princess! still sorely I fear;
Sad fancies assail me, sad omens appear.
The ties will dissolve, and the marriage-ring break,
If we care not the blessing of heaven to seek.
Whenc'er the proud king shall our fondness have heard,
My heart's blood will flow on the murderous sword;
And thou in some vault of the castle wilt groan,
Disgraced, and unpitied, and perish alone."

"Dear youth, Heaven tears not the bonds, that are wove'
By faith, by true fondness, and mutual love.
None will hear, and none see, thro' the stillness of night
The joys, the soft transports, of tender delight.
Come near me, loved husband, and give me one kiss,
Dear pledge of sweet faith and of rapturous bliss."

He came, and he kiss'd her cheek blushing with love,
And the charms of her touch all his terrors remove.
With kisses soft-glowing each other they press,
With love breathing words, and with tender caress.

Enraged the king hears them their passion disclose,
But bolts and strong locks did his passage oppose.
He waits, and he watches with rage-swelling breast,
As a dog, that has crouch'd at the den of a beast;
While the heart of the youth, which no pleasure can warm,
Grows colder and sadder with fearful alarm.

"Awake, my sweet princess! I hear the cock crow;
Let me leave thee, before the bright morning shall glow!"

"O sweetest! awhile in my bosom delay;
'Tis but the first night-watch, and safely you stay."

"Look out, my sweet princess! the heavens grow light;
Let me leave thee, ere round us the morning shine bright!"

"O dearest! awhile in my bosom delay;
The light will not yet our fond raptures bewray."

"Ah listen, my princess! Ah hear'st thou the sound
Of swallows, that * warble their matins around?"

* *Germ.* Wirbeln.

"O my darling! awhile in my bosom delay;
Thou hear'st but the nightingale's love breathing lay."
"Let me leave thee! I hear the cock, loudly that crows;
The morning shines clear, and the morning air blows;
The swallows they warble. O let me depart!
O let me! alas! what so troubles my heart?"
"Adieu, my sweet husband! nay, yet tarry here!
Ah me! my sad bosom! why heaves it with fear?
Here shew me thine heart! O why throbs it so sore?
Dear heart, love me now, and to-morrow night more!"
"Farewell, my sweet princess!" Then crept he away,
And fled thro' the passage with fear and dismay;
All trembling, and pale, as the dead, with affright,
He stumbled along by the glimmering light.
O then from their ambush they both rush'd amain,
And, "Shalt thou for Burgundy's crown woo in vain!"
Thus crying they smote the fair page to the ground;
"There, hast thou the dowry! there take it, thou hound!"

" O merciful Christ, take my soul to thy rest!"
He said, and his dying head sunk on his breast.
His soul from his bosom with fearful dismay
Then fled, unappointed, unhousel'd, away.
The proud Spanish prince, fiercely foaming with rage,
With his blade rent the breast of the beautiful page.
" Here shew me thine heart! O why throbs it so sore?
Hast thou had love to-night? wilt to-morrow have more?"
Then tore he the quivering heart from his breast,
And sated his fury with horrible jest.
" Now, heart, then I have thee! why throbs it so sore?
Love now, thou fond heart, and to-morrow love more!"
Meanwhile the fair princess wild terrors assail;
Strange dreams in her sleep and sad visions prevail;
Of pearls stain'd with blood, garlands dropping with gore,
Of horrible dances, and hellish uproar.
From morning till evening all mournful and sad
On the bed her fair limbs sick and weary she laid.
" Come, midnight, and quiet my fearful alarms!
Come, midnight, and bring the dear youth to mine arms!"

"And, when midnight had sounded the summons of love,
And the tranquil stars gleam'd in the heavens above,
"Ah me! my fond bosom! why throbs it so sore?
Hark! hark! 'tis the sound of the small hidden door."
Then enter'd a youth all in mourning array'd,
With a torch, and a shroud, and approach'd to the maid;
And a bloody ring broken before her he threw,
And, slowly returning, in silence withdrew.
Then follow'd a youth all in purple array'd,
And a gold urn he bore, which he placed by the maid;
A gold urn with handle, and lid, and the crest
Of the king on its glittering cover impress'd.
Then follow'd a youth all in silver array'd,
And a letter he bore, which he gave to the maid;
To the maid all with horror and wonder inspired,
And bow'd, as he went, and in silence retired.
And, when the sad princess with terror all pale
Had read in this letter the horrible tale,
Dim, dim grew her sight, as if clouds gather'd round;

She clench'd it with anguish, and sprung from the ground:
And, soon with strain'd vigor collecting her might,
From her high-throbbing bosom dismissing affright,
Thus danced she, thus sung she, loud crying, "Hurrah!
My bridegroom is there; let the loud harpers play!
Hurrah! hurrah! dance ye with pleasure and love!
The garland waves round me! my feet nimbly move!
Now dance, all ye lords, and ye ladies so gay,
And still, as ye dance, let the loud harpers play!
O see ye my true love in silver array'd,
How noble his figure, how gracefully made?
Do ye see on his bosom a purple star shine?
Hurrah! all ye lords, and ye ladies so fine!
Now dance ye with pleasure! why thus turn away?
Why scorn him, ye lords, and ye ladies so gay?
For he is the bridegroom, and I am the bride;
And the angels of heaven the marriage-bond tied.
Now dance ye! now dance ye! Why thus turn away?
Why scorn him, ye lords, and ye ladies so gay?
Away, ye proud rabble, away from mine eyes!

I hate all your titles, your pride I despise.
The lord and the slave spring alike from the earth,
And a noble heart graces the meanest in birth.
My beautiful page bore a worthier mind,
Than ever the breast of a noble enshrined.
Play, play, the sweet music of pleasure and love!
The garland waves round me! my feet nimbly move!
Hurrah! to the dance of the wedding! hurrah!
My bridegroom is here, let the loud harpers play!"
Thus sung she, still dancing; thus danced, as she sung;
Till on her cold bosom the dew of death hung.
The dew of death gather'd her pale cheeks around;
She panted, and fainting she fell to the ground.
When the warm blood began to her heart to return,
Her hands just reviving she stretch'd to the urn;
In her arms she embraced it, and on her lap held,
And, raising its top, the dire sight she beheld.
His heart seem'd against her still throbbing to beat,
As if yet it felt pain, as if yet it felt heat.
Then fast from her fair eyes all clouded with woe,

Like rain-drops thick streaming, the bitter tears flow.
" O anguish! now seem'st thou like water and wind;
Swift flows by the water, swift passes the wind;
Yet ne'er will all pass, nor will all flow away;
So thou, bitter anguish, wilt ne'er pass away!"
Then sunk she heart-broken with sad hollow eye
In the cold sweat of death on the pavement to lie;
And with painful convulsion fast, fast, to her breast,
Fast, fast, to her fond heart, the bloody urn press'd.
" Dear heart! I lived for thee, and for thee shall die.
O it bursts thro' my bosom, still throbbing so high!
It weighs, O it weighs, like a stone, in my breast!
O merciful Christ, take my soul to thy rest!"
Then closed she her lips, and then closed she her eyes;
Now the messengers hasten'd; the king heard their cries:
Swift and loud thro' the castle their mournful shrieks sound,
" The princess, the princess lies dead on the ground!"
Distracted the monarch with fury was moved,
So dearly his darling Blandina he loved;

He valued her more, than his sceptre and crown,
And more, than the gold of his glittering throne.
As he rush'd t'wards the traitor with agonised mind,
"What reward dost thou hope for thy treason to find?
On Burgundy's ground shall thy heart's blood be spilt,
To pay the just price of thy treacherous guilt.
Her blood cries to heaven for vengeance on thee,
And justice above speaks the fatal decree."
His glittering dagger then quickly he drew,
And with fury the vile Spanish reptile he slew.
"O wretched Lenardo! Blandina beloved!
O merciful God, by my sorrow be moved!
My child, if my sad crimes may yet be forgiv'n,
Accuse not thy sire at the high throne of heav'n!"
Thus grieving too late did the monarch repent,
And curse the foul deed, when his anger was spent.
Of silver a sumptuous coffin was made,
And the true lovers' bodies together were laid.

THE

MORNING SONG.

From the German by Gesner.

1792.

Hail, orient Sun, auspicious light!
Hail, new-born orb of day!
Lo, from behind the wood-crown'd height
Breaks forth thy glittering ray.

Behold it sparkle in the stream,
And on the dew-drop shine!
O may sweet Joy's enlivening beam
Mix his pure rays with thine!

The Zephyrs now with frolic wing
Their rosy beds forsake;
And, shedding round the sweets of spring,
Their drowsy comrades wake.

Soft Sleep and all his airy forms
  Fly from the dawning day:
Like little loves O may their swarms
  On Chloe's bosom play!

Ye Zephyrs, haste; from every flow'r
  The sweetest perfumes take;
And bear them hence to Chloe's bow'r;
  For soon the maid must wake!

And hovering round her fragrant bed
  In breezes call my fair;
Go, frolic round her graceful head,
  And scent her golden hair!

Then gently whisper in her ear,
  That ere the Sun gan rise,
By the soft murmuring fountain here
  I breathed her name in sighs.

THE

SEA VOYAGE.

From the German by Gesner.

1795.

It flies, the ship, which bears my love
To distant realms away!
May nought, but Cupids, round thee move;
No breeze, but Zephyr, play!

Soft, soft, ye billows, heave around!
Upon the rolling sea
Still, as you mark the white waves bound,
My true love, think on me!

The birds here warble in the trees,
Their tenderest notes for you,
Each grean leaf trembles to the breeze,
Each reed, and shadowy bough.

O let thy swelling waves be laid!
O hush thee, roaring sea!
Ne'er trusted yet a sweeter maid
Her angel form to thee!

Pure, as the Sun's reflected blaze
Upon thy glassy flood;
Fair, as of old the lovely grace
Of sea-born Venus stood;

When Gods, in sedgy caves that dwell,
Beheld with ravish'd eyes
All naked on her frothy shell
The perfect beauty rise;

Forgot their sports, their nymphs forsook,
Nor reck'd their jealous mood,
But to the shore with eager look
The queen of love pursued.

THE

WATERFALL.

From the German by Gesner.

1795.

Is this the vale, whose shadowy wood
Breathed o'er my bosom strange delight?
Is this the rock, whose sparkling flood
Plunged lightly from the wood-crown'd height?

Lo! where the foaming stream from high
Dash'd on its mossy couch below,
A frozen column meets my eye,
Suspended from the beetling brow.

How bare, how naked, frowns the glade!
Where late in thick o'er-arching bow'rs
Soft zephyrs thro' the foliage stray'd,
And gently waved the scented flow'rs;

Where late the glancing sunbeams play'd
On the bright waves and mossy bed;
Or gleam'd along the checker'd shade,
Which leafless now o'er-hangs my head.

Soon, soon, sweet spring will warm the sky,
And deck the groves with livelier hue;
Awake each floweret's sparkling eye,
And melt the frost with genial dew.

O then receive me in your shade,
Ye rocks, that crown the vallies deep,
Ye woods, that deck this watery glade,
And wave beneath the rocky steep!

No cares shall there my bosom pain;
No fearful thoughts my heart alarm;
From hill, from grove, and flowery plain,
Shall sweetly steal a soothing charm.

And wherefore envy those, that shine,
And bask in fortune's transient beam?
While with my flask of jovial wine
I lay me by the rippling stream;

While sweet success may crown my lays
Amid these cool delicious bow'rs;
And future ages learn to praise
The pastime of my harmless hours.

SONG OF A SWISS

TO

HIS MAID IN ARMOUR.

From the German by Gesner.

1798.

WHAT beauteous vision charms my sight!
'Tis you, my darling maid;
The polish'd helmet's trembling light
Beams from your gentle head.

A varied plume waves with the wind
Upon your lovely brow;
From which the auburn curls behind
In simple ringlets flow.

An iron breast-plate rudely feels
Your heaving bosom rise.
Ah cruel steel! which thus conceals
That bosom from my eyes.

Yet charm'd I view the graceful knee,
The slender ankle too;
Which late the robe forbade to see,
And fancy faintly drew.

At Eden's gates in arms array'd
A blooming cherub stands;
Like him you shine, my lovely maid,
And raise your guardian hands.

As his bright looks the fiend oppose,
But joy the good to see;
Your blue eye frights our haughty foes,
Yet sweetly smiles on me.

Harmless o'er you each hostile dart
Shall lightly whistle by;
Alone to wound that tender heart
Love's gentle arrows fly.

NOTE

ON THE

SONG OF A SWISS

TO

HIS MAID IN ARMOUR.

"When Zurich was besieged by the Emperor Albert, the wives and daughters of that state arrayed themselves in breastplates, and mixed with the soldiers in complete armour. The emperor was alarmed at the numbers of their army, and retired from their territory." *Gesner.*

This seems to me to be a mistake. Zurich, as I reckon, was not besieged by the Emperor Albert, but by Albert Duke of Austria, assisted by the Emperor Charles the fourth, in the year 1354. He was unsuccessful in this siege, to which Gesner probably alludes. He was son to Albert the first, and (I believe) grandfather to Albert the second, but was never Emperor. For the account of his besieging Zurich, see *Schmidt's History of Germany, vol. 4th.*

SIR EBBA.

Translated from the Danish.

1803.

Sir Ebba let * bigg a bower so tall,
As still each native knows,
There sing the small thrush and the nightingale,
Two damsels within it repose.

Sir Ebba he must to Iceland go
To bear his lord's behest;
That bower, I ween, his daughters two
Will find no place of rest.

Sir Bonda and Sir Schimild there
Leagued with their mother came,
To harm Sir Ebba's daughters fair,
And work them scath and shame.

* *Let bigg a bower*, caused a bower to be constructed.

The younger brother trembled sore
To work the damsel's shame.
"Comes Sir Ebba in peace to his native shore,
He venges his daughter's fame."

Then pale and wan grew his mother's face,
And savage wax'd her heart.
"Thou bear'st not the soul of thy father's race,
But play'st a coward's part.

There's none within to check your might
Beside two varlets small;
And, were they both in iron dight,
They must before ye fall."

Early in the morning
They whet the shining spear;
At the close of evening
Before the bower appear.

Under the lofty chamber's tier
In rush'd the knights amain;
They ask no leave, they know no fear,
But fast the chamber gain.

Up then awoke those ladies fair
To guard their maiden pride;
Sir Bonda and Sir Schinnild there
Lay by their snowy side.

The damsels wept full bitterly
With many a maiden tear;
And pray'd them for their modesty
To dread their father dear.

Up rose the knights, and went forth, ere
Day lit the mountain's side;
They thank'd for what they gain'd by fear,
But dared not longer bide.

The younger sister wailed soon,
For she fell first to shame;
"Let us sink with a stone in the billows down,
And bury our blighted fame."

The elder sister answer'd strait;
"Nay, gentle sister, nay,
Our sire from Iceland we'll await;
He'll venge us, if he may."

It was the good Sir Ebba there,
From Iceland home he came;
To meet him both his daughters fair
All weeping went with shame.

"Now welcome, welcome, father dear;
So sore for you we cried;
Sir Bonda and Sir Schinnild here
Have stain'd our maiden pride."

Sir Ebba's heart wax'd sore with woe,
To hear their mournful plight;
And, "Ill to Iceland did I go;
Now come the deadly fight!"

"You must not for our ravish'd fame
Bear helm and weapons keen;
We will by craft avenge our shame,
Though reft of honor sheen."

It falls upon a Christmas night,
To mass the people hies;
Betimes to whet their daggers bright
Sir Ebba's daughters rise.

Now shall Sir Ebba's daughters do
A deed of scath, I ween;
But they must not to the altar go
Without their weapons keen.

Sheen, bright.

Lady Metelill smiled, and a glowing hue
Gleam'd under her rosy skin;
And, "Stand ye up, like ladies true!
Let the brides of my children in!"

Sir Bonda and Sir Schinnild there
To join the mass had sped;
And Trunda young, and Zenild fair
Did fast behind them tread.

North within the armory bright
Young Trunda drew her blade;
South before the altar's light
Sir Bonda's fallen dead.

South beside the altar's ledge
Fair Zenild drew her knife;
North upon the grunsel edge
Sir Schinnild lost his life.

Grunsel, threshold.

"Here stand we now as widows two,
For neither is now a maid;
And, lady, take your children two
To eat with salt and bread!"

Seven winters o'er that mournful place
Sad interdiction hung;
Nor rite was done, nor holy mass,
Nor funeral anthem sung.

On Helen's hill was a chapel built,
And there went woman and man;
Till the Pope absolved the church from guilt,
And loosed the fatal ban.

NOTES

ON

THE BALLAD OF SIR EBBA.

THE ballad of Sir Ebba is translated from an old Danish song printed in *Suhms Nye Samlinger til de Danske Historie* from a manuscript of Dr. Deichman's, who lived at the close of the seventeenth century, and travelled through Germany, Holland, and England; during which excursions he kept a literary journal, and continued it after his return to Denmark. The ballad is extracted from this journal with the following account. "Mr. Peter Wiskinge communicated to me the following old song, which has never been printed, and is founded upon a story still preserved in the traditions of the old people of Höybye; where the hill is shewn, upon which divine service was performed during seven years, while the church was under the Pope's ban." It is in metre and expression, as well as in the conduct of the story, exactly similar to our old ballads;

and on that account I have been desirous of translating it as literally, as possible. After every stanza in the original a short verse is repeated, of which the English would be "So merrily they went." It has no meaning in its place, but was used as a burthen, like "Bonny St. Johnson stands upon Tay," and other lines of that sort. This ballad is named "An old song about Sir Ebba, who dwelt upon an island called Buuröe in the parish of Höybye in the lordship of Aad." The lordship of Aad is in Seeland, not very distant from Copenhagen. The names Ebba, Bonda, and Trunda, are spelt in the Danish with a final *e*, which is pronounced almost like a short *a* in English.

V. 1. "*Let bigg a bowzer so tall.*" In the original it stands, "Lod bygge saa höje en buure." The similarity of expression in the old Danish and old English is here remarkable. The verb *let* is frequently used as an auxiliary by the old English writers, as in the mort d'Arthur, c. 127. "Sir Galahalt the haute prince let cry, what knight somevar he was, that smote down Sir

Palomides, should have his damosel to himself." c. 128. "Sir Launcelot let blow unto lodging." and c. 131. "Sir Galahalt the haute prince let blow unto lodging." To bigg is common for to build or construct; as in the minstrelsy of the Scottish border, v. 2. p. 7. "And he's bigged a bour on gude green wood." Buur or bur in Danish means a cage; but I have ventured in this place to translate it by the word *bower*, of which I am persuaded this is the origin. Johnson gives a very unsatisfactory etymology of our word *bower*, or *bour*, deriving it from the *boughs* of trees, with which he supposes it to be constructed, or from the verb to *bow*, or bend. The most frequent sense of the word in old writings is a chamber, or the apartment of a lady; and meaning (as I have observed) in the Danish a cage to keep birds in, it seems to have had a metaphorical allusion to the old word *burd* or *byrd*, which is frequently used for a maid; as for instance in the beautiful song of Helen of Kirkonell Lee, "When in my arms burd Helen dropt, And died to succour me."

In this ballad the thrush and nightingale seem to be used metaphorically for the damsels. It appears in a note by Bussæus to king Alfred's Periplus Outheri, that the species of whale, which is called by the Norwegians Huus-vhal, was formerly known by the name of Burh-valr. Olaus Magnus, lib. 21. c. 22 and 23. relates, that the inhabitants of the northern coasts made their huts of the skeletons of whales covered over with skins; and this had induced me to imagine, that the name alluded to this custom: but in the notes to Speculum Regale, p. 127. it is stated to be derived from the particular structure of the whale itself. "Det navn Buurhval, som dem gives af det Buur eller Forraads-Kammer *(cellâ cibariâ)*, som er i deres hoved." *i. e.* "The name Buurhval, which is given them from the *Buur* or provision-chamber, which is in their head." I find, that Bur is used in the Anglo-saxon for a hut, or chamber; as it is likewise in the Icelandic. Bur is also used in the Icelandic for a larder; and in compound fata-bur, a clothes-press; so that it appears

to be the root of bureau, as well as bower. Bua, Island. and boe, Dan. is to inhabit, from whence Bu, bo, bol, boepœl, Isl. Swed. and Dan. for a habitation, and By, or bye, a town, whence our word bye-laws. Jomfrue-bur is still used in Danish for a maiden's chamber.

V. 25. This change of metre is in the original also.

V. 77. Lady Maisry seems to be the mother of the two knights, and she speaks ironically.

V. 85. "*Armory.*" In the original it is Vaabenhuus, or Arm-house. Anglo-saxon, Wapenhus. It must mean a part of the church, in which the public weapons were deposited. It is still the custom in Denmark to have an armory in most parishes, either in or attached to the church. I find in a Swedish book Wapenhus interpreted the porch of a church; and this is probably the meaning of Vaabenhuus in this ballad, the arms being suspended in the entrance of the church.

FROM

THE DANISH.

In Evalds Fiskerne.

1803.

From high the seaman's wearied sight
Spies the green forests with delight,
Which seem to promise rest and joy;
But woe is him, if hope deceives,
If his fond eye too late perceives
The breakers lurking to destroy.

O sweetest pledge of love and pleasure,
Enchanting smile! thy depth I'll measure,
Wary, as in the shallow tide;
That, if beneath that garb of beauty
The mind has shoals to wreck my duty,
I strait may seek the waters wide.

SPEECH

OF

LUSIGNAN.

From the Zaire of Voltaire.

1801.

My God, I have fought sixty years for thy fame,
Seen thy temple demolish'd, and perish thy name;
Twenty years my sad vows in a dungeon were pour'd,
My tears for my children thy mercy implored;
And, when thou restorest them, to double my woe,
When I find a lost daughter, I find her thy foe.
My child, dearest object in death's latest pains,
Think at least of the proud blood, which throbs in thy veins!
Of Christian kings 'tis the pure martyr'd blood;
'Tis the blood of true heroes, who fought for our God.
O daughter still cherish'd! O knowest thou not
Thine own bitter fate, and thy mother's dire lot?
Know'st thou, daughter, that, when she had given to light
Thee, last and sad fruit of our nuptial delight,

These eyes saw her bosom by murderers torn,
By the hands of those ruffians, to whom thou art sworn?
Thy brothers, dear martyrs destroy'd in my sight,
With gory hands beckon from heaven's blest height.
In this spot, where mine arm has oft vanquish'd his foes,
Where the spirit of him in my feeble voice glows,
For the world thy God died, and for thee, wretched maid,
Whose tongue has blasphemed him, whose bosom betray'd.
Mark this temple, these walls, by thy tyrants possess'd;
All speak of the God, whom thine ancestors bless'd.
Turn thine eyes; near this dome, thy fell master's abode,
Near this impious dome, is the tomb of thy God,
And the mount, to atone for the sins of mankind
Where to traitors unholy his life he resign'd;
Then arose again living. Thou canst not move round,
Without tracing thy God in this thrice hallow'd ground;
Thou canst not remain, without cursing his word,
Renouncing thy father, denying thy Lord.

FROM

CATULLUS, 3.

1792.

With mournful voice and faultering tongue,
With sweetly sympathetic moan,
Begin, ye loves, the funeral song!
The bird, my fair one's joy, is gone!

The bird, she nurs'd with anxious care,
And fondly cherish'd night and day;
For never from the gentle fair
The little darling wish'd to stray.

Now perch'd upon her graceful head
With frolic wing and warbling throat;
Now on her snowy bosom laid
He sweetly tuned his artless note.

Cold death, alas! has closed his eyes;
(With tears bedew his funeral urn!)
In those sad realms of night he lies,
Whence mortal beauties ne'er return.

Ye barbarous Fates, who love to crop
The prime of youth and beauty's flow'r,
Ah! could ye not relenting stop
The furies of your cruel pow'r!

Behold my fair one's swollen eyes
With tears of never ceasing grief!
Behold her bosom heave with sighs,
To heart-felt pangs the faint relief!

'Tis ye, that cause those tears to flow;
'Tis ye, that cause that breast to heave;
Your hands have oped the source of woe,
And doom'd my lovely nymph to grieve.

FROM

HORACE,

B. 1. *ODE* 22.

1792.

THAT happy man, whose virtuous heart
Is free from guilt and conscious fear,
Needs not the poison'd Moorish dart,
Nor bow, nor sword, nor deadly spear;

Whether on shores, that Ganges laves,
Or Syrtes' quivering sands among;
Or where Hydaspes' fabled waves
In strange mæanders wind along.

When free from care I dared to rove,
And Lalage inspired my lay,
A wolf within the Sabine grove
Fled wild from his defenceless prey.

Such prodigy the Daunian bands
In their drear haunts shall never trace;
Nor barren Libya's arid sands,
Rough parent of the lion race.

O place me, where no verdure smiles,
No vernal zephyrs fan the ground,
No varied scene the eye beguiles,
Nor murmuring rivulets glide around!

Place me on Thracia's frozen lands,
Uncheer'd by genial light of day!
Place me on Afric's burning sands,
Scorch'd by the sun's inclement ray!

Love in my heart shall pain beguile,
Sweet Lalage shall be my song;
The gentle beauties of her smile,
The gentle music of her tongue.

FROM

CASIMIR SARBIEVIUS,

B. 2. ODE 2.

1793.

THE snow, that crowns each mountain's brow,
And whitens every spray,
From each high rock and loaded bough
Will quickly melt away;

Soon, as the sun's reviving ray
Shall warm the northern gale,
And Zephyrs mild their wings display
To wanton in the vale.

When Time upon thine aged brow
Shall shed the fatal show'r,
The hoary frost, the chilling snow,
Will melt from thence no more.

Quick summer flies, and autumn's suns,
And winter's cheerless gloom;
In changeful turn each season runs,
And spring breathes new perfume.

Unchanged o'er us the tempest low'rs,
Till death's last hour arrives;
Nor robe, nor garland deck'd with flow'rs,
The bloom of life revives.

What youth on us but once bestows,
Age once shall snatch away;
But Fame can stop the fatal blows,
And double life's short day.

Long shall he live, whose bright career
Deserv'd a patriot's sigh;
All else flies with the fleeting year,
But Fame can never die.

FROM

ANDREAS NAUGERIUS.

1795.

Midst odorous flowers Hyella chanced to rove,
And the pale lily with the rosebud wove;
Love slumbering in the leaves the virgin spied,
And midst her flowers the tender elf she tied.
Frighten'd he starts, and tries his feeble arm;
His little pinions tremble with alarm.
Soon, as he mark'd her heaving bosom rise,
Her cheeks soft blushing and love-darting eyes,
Arabia's perfumes in her golden hair
Breathing ambrosia on the wanton air;
"Mother," (he cried) "thine empire I disown;
"This lovely seat shall be my future throne."

FROM

B E Z A.

1795.

ZEPHYR, who feels't nor heat, nor cold,
But lov'st the vernal ray;
Go, fan my fair one's locks of gold,
And in each ringlet play!

Since every coast your wings explore,
And through each climate rove;
Say, have you seen on any shore
Aught fairer, than my love?

But, gentle Zephyr, tell, I pray,
While thus you fan her hair,
Will not some curl your wings delay,
And bind your limbs of air?

For those, which flowing ringlets seem,
Are not soft locks of hair;
Ah! Cupid's net each ringlet deem,
Some lover to ensnare!

For, as the spider's tender toil
Enwraps the unwary bee,
Alas! so Love's successful guile
Has spread the net for me.

Thus, Zephyr, you will soon or late
A tangled victim lie.
But, O ye Gods! if such his fate,
How sweetly will he die!

FROM

THE SPANISH.

By D. Manuel de Villegas.

1804.

O CONSTANT guest of April fair,
Sweet wanderer of the verdant grove,
Zephyr, whose trembling pinions bear
The spirit warm of gentle love!

If thou hast heard my mournful strain,
The tuneful plaint of fond desire,
Go, seek the nymph, who caused my pain,
And fearless tell her, I expire!

Ah! once the maiden heard me mourn,
Nor were my sorrows tuned in vain;
Ah! once she loved; but now forlorn
I prove her wrath, her cold disdain.

Sweet Zephyr! so each heavenly Pow'r,
That rules the changeful gales of spring,
Forbid the sleet or driving show'r
To chill thy light and blithesome wing!

When big the storm with thunder low'rs,
And brightly gleam the summits high,
Nor hail annoy thy humble bow'rs,
Nor frightful tempest rattle nigh!

ODE

TO

DESPAIR.

Irregular.

1796.

I.

O THOU, the fiend to Death allied,
Who sit'st by weeping Sorrow's side,
And bid'st unreal shapes arise
Of monsterous port and giant size,
Despair! thy gorgon eye
Can numb the heart with stern controul,
And bind in ice the palsied soul.
Where'er beneath some whistling shed
Thy sullen form is laid,
Scaring from orphan breasts the balm of sleep;
Or listening to the hollow sigh
Of her, whose infants watch and weep,
While round her side with slow consuming pang
The barking dogs of famine hang.

2.

Or cast upon some trackless shore,
'Gainst which the barren billows roar,
Thou turn'st thy leaden eyes in vain
Across the immeasurable main;
And thro' the hoarsely murmuring spray
Hear'st the sad sea-shriek die away:
While thro' the howling storm in awful pride
The baleful spirits of the thunder ride.

3.

Oft by the taper's mournful ray
In arched vaults but dimly seen,
Where cloister'd virgins vainly pray,
Thou lov'st to mark the solemn scene;
And haunt the gloomy cell,
Where pale Regret and hopeless Memory dwell,
And weeping Love; and by his side
Unsated Lust and lingering Pride,
Who left the world, they loved so well;
And Shame, that shuns the day.

4

But fiercest on the blood-stain'd ground,
Where crush'd Ambition stares around,
And kindred Vice of coward soul,
That hugs the knife with downcast eye,
And dreads the blow, she dares not fly;
There sits thy dark terrific form
With swollen balls, that wildly roll,
And points the slowly gathering storm
Big with the threats of fate.
Around thy hideous phantoms wait;
And chiefly he, the giant pow'r,
Whom lustful Sin to Murder bore,
Fell Suicide, that stalks behind
With ghastly smile and baneful breath,
When hope has left the guilty mind,
Sounding the dirge of death.

" L'aura soave, e l'alba rugiadosa,
L'aqua, la terra al suo favor s'inchina;
Giovani vaghi, e donne innamorate
Amano averne e seni e tempie ornate."

ARIOSTO.

1799.

FROM all the sweets, that scent the vernal air,
All, that on nature's gaudy lap repose,
This humble flower the modest virgin chose,
Pure, as herself, and delicately fair.

Sweet emblem of the maid by all admired,
Thee earliest of the year, some stream along,
Where the lone blackbird trills his mellow song,
My strains shall cherish, by thy sight inspired!

Thee when I view, my fancy still pourtrays
That form, where nature's choicest beauties vie;
The bashful look, that shuns the adoring eye;
The untaught elegance, and simple grace:

Still I behold that rosy-smiling mouth;
Those eyes with feeling exquisitely bright,
With tender thoughts and delicate delight;
That bosom glowing with the light of youth.

Thrice happy flower! on nature's simple bed,
Where no refinement taints the breath of spring,
Thou lov'st the genial South-wind's dewy wing,
The clear stream's freshness, and the willow's shade.

There, shelter'd from the sun and vernal hail,
In fearless peace thou rear'st thy modest head;
Or on that fairest bosom gently laid,
No cares molest thee, and no pangs assail.

O! could the troubled mind such calmness prove
In peace and social ease completely bless'd,
The smile of joy would lull each care to rest,
And bind us to the tranquil breast of love.

ANACREONTICS.

" Διδακτὸν μηδὲν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ φύσει
Τὸ σωφρονεῖν εἴληχεν."

EURIP. HIPPOL.

1800.

RUTHLESS Cupid, wouldst thou bind
Fast and firm my roving mind,
Search, and find a lovely maid,
Fair, as nature e'er display'd!
Let her unambitious be;
Frank, but free from levity;
Guarded so by modest look,
That her thoughts e'en dread rebuke:
What she saith unstudied, best;
Simple, sweet, by nature bless'd.
Let her bosom softly swelling
Heave at mournful story's telling.
Let her sometimes (thus most fair)
Gentle melancholy wear;

Let her sometimes (fairer still)
Chase it by the sweetest smile,
That did ever beauty give
To the loveliest forms, that live.
Give her features not so fair,
As are called regular;
But which might expression lend
Lovelier to the fairest friend:
Sparkling eyes, whose modest fire
Somewhat beams of fond desire;
Tresses soft, that simply flow
O'er a neck of purest snow.
Let her teeth be shining white;
Let her mouth be small and bright,
Of such hue, that freshest rose
By comparison would lose.
Let her feet, a tiny pair,
Figure light and airy bear;
And, like visions of the bless'd,
Scarce have touch'd the soil, they press'd.

Search the world, great God of love,
Search the fairest crowds, that move;
Find her such, and add to this
Meeting wishes, meeting bliss;
Find her such, and thou shalt be
Mine adored Deity.

ON

THE DEATH

OF

* * * *AFTER A SHORT ILLNESS.*

1801.

If manners mild with mirth combined,
If truth adorns a female mind,
And fond domestic love,
Sweet maid, adieu! the farewell tear,
Which friendship pays thine early bier,
Shall every saint approve.

For not the brightest fairest rays,
Which beauty's slippery form displays,
So reason can enthrall,
As the chaste heart, devoid of pride,
The smile to gentle joys allied,
When harmless pleasures call.

Thy name amidst the circle gay,
Who in life's idle sunshine play,
  Shall soon be heard no more;
But those, who loved thy gentle form,
Whose hearts can prize each social charm,
  Will long thy loss deplore.

Friendship, when many a winter's blast
Shall o'er thy mouldering tomb have pass'd,
  Will still thine image view;
Still will the mind, which draws to light
Each fleeting scene of past delight,
  The tender thought renew.

Sweet maid, farewell! thy smiling face
The mournful friend no more shall trace
  Amidst the moving crowd;
But oft the bitter hour recall,
Which saw thee in life's springtime fall,
  And wrapp'd thy fatal shroud.

WRITTEN IN THE

NEIGHBOURHOOD

OF

CROYLAND ABBEY.

1801.

O VENERABLE pile! whose shatter'd form
From abject Croyland's melancholy site
Looks proudly o'er this wide extended plain,
Much of thine ancient grandeur and high name
Old annals tell; much of fierce elfin shapes,
And fiery forms, amid thy lonely fens
Strange sojourners, who never dared invade
Thy hallow'd precincts, but around them lurk'd
To harm the holy pilgrim wandering nigh.
So monks have fabled; now forlorn thou see'st
No mitred feasts, no pride of papal rites:
Fallen are the domes, where once Ingulphus dwelt,
Where pomp and learning reign'd. Thy sounding tow'r
Calls but the simple cottager to pray,

Neglected now: yet not by me unbless'd;
For here unknown beneath a humble roof
Oft have I changed the tumult of the town,
The toil of study, and the city's smoke,
For healthy exercise and private ease;
Forgetful of the busy cares, that lie
Thick scatter'd on the restless path of life.
O holy Solitude! thy charming cup,
Too deeply quaff'd, unfits the social mind
For public intercourse and useful toils;
But sometimes woo'd thou dost correct our thoughts,
Soften the rude asperity of pride,
Wake each pure feeling, and exalt the heart.
On thee, mild Power, (wherever fate shall guide
Thro' the wild storms of faction, which have rent
The solid base of Europe, and now shake
My trembling country) sometimes will I call;
Whether on rushy moor, or shady bank,
In active exercise, or tranquil rest,
Still cherish'd, still chaste partner of my thoughts!

WRITTEN IN

SOMERSETSHIRE.

1801.

O how I love the woody steeps to climb,
Which overhang thy solitary stream,
Clear-flowing Barle! or tread the broken stones,
Round which thy never-ceasing waters foam,
And ever and anon rough-tumbling roar
Beneath the oaken shade. Hail, beauteous hills!
On whose steep sides the cooing ringdove sits,
Or diving thro' the deep expanse of air
Flaps his delighted wings, and towers again;
And thou, romantic spot, where close beneath
Mountsey's proud brow and Anstey's stately moor
Danesbrook and Barle their noisy streams unite:
Upon your sides abrupt the pausing eye
Dwells charmed, as it views each sparkling spring
Shine thro' the gloomy woods, and trickle down.

Delightful dales! your peaceful course along
Joyous I stray, nor heedless, nor unmoved,
With other thoughts, than in the circle gay.
O innocence! O peace! your simple forms,
Fair images on nature's lap impress'd,
More sweetly shew, than all the trick of art,
Or gorgeous splendor of barbaric pomp.
Had I but liberty, and power to roam
Unshakled by refinement, free from care,
Midst Americ's lakes, or Australasian wilds,
Then would I sing of many a savage race,
Who dwell in forests huge and boundless woods;
Of many a spirit, by their fancy form'd,
Who stir the whirlpool, or the tempest guide,
Invisible; and that* enormous bird,
Which, (as Chepewyans tell) ere earth there was,
O'er the wide waste of trackless ocean ranged,
With eyes, that lightening glanced, and thunderous wings;
At whose enchanting touch from torpor roused
The vast earth started from its oozy bed,

* See Mackenzie's voyage in North America.

And all the goodly shapes, which nature wears,
From the deep bosom of the water rose.
Such tales, tho' wild, by many a tribe believed,
Suit well the fictions of sweet poësy:
Delightful fictions of the roving mind,
And so delightful only, as they bear
The simple stamp of nature; worthless else,
Or only valued by distemper'd minds,
Which, pamper'd by the vicious hand of art,
Know not to prize the unpolluted shapes
Of beauty, loveliest, when least adorn'd.
Me other thoughts and other cares detain
Bound to my native land; whose Muses dwell
In Cam's soft breast, or Eton's fostering arms,
Whom to majestic Thames fair Isis bore,
Pledge of their married loves. O parent dear,
From whom I drew the milk of classic lore,
And early learn'd to tune the willing lyre
To other strains, than meet the savage ear!
What meeter service can thy Muses find,

(While Irreligion holds her proud career,
Shaking the thrones of kings and bulwarks old
Of social rule) than chuse some sacred theme,
And from the hallow'd springs of Palestine
Draw numbers chaste and clear? or, if the source
Of those delightful streams be whilom dried
By Milton's holy thirst, attune the lyre
To sing their country's greater poorer days,
And tell, how generous Temple's equal mind
Attemper'd Chatham's pride; while Europe saw
The kindred patriots wield the bolt of war
Invincible, and spread thro' Britain's sons
The virtues, which inform'd their mighty souls?
Nor bootless to such task the love, I bear
To those Aonian shades, where Lucan cull'd
Fresh garlands to adorn the historic page.
Proud youth, whose liberal song was loved of old,
E'en in that vicious age, when haughty Rome
Gasp'd at the foot of a licentious lord!
While Cato's name shall fill the listening ear,

And Freedom's voice be cherish'd, still shall live
Thy manly thoughts, and from the glowing mind
Draw praise, above thy verse, which bears the taint
Of that polluted time! For not to all,
Not to the bards of falling Rome was giv'n
To sound that vocal shell, whence Milton drew
Numbers sonorous, fraught with science deep;
Such as majestic Greece had wondering heard,
Nor Freedom's proudest sons disdain'd to own.
Nymphs of Permessus! ye, who chastely guard
The bowers of poesy, and guide the streams
Of witching music; pardon, if uncall'd
I tread with foot adventurous the bank
Of pale Pircne, or the flowery marge
Of fabled Helicon! O holy bards,
Whose spirits hovering yet endear the vales
Of Temple evergreen, and leafy shades
Of wood-crown'd Academus; or the grot,
Where Dorian Arethuse first heard the strains
Of rural minstrelsy! your voices pure

Still sound in fancy's ear, and oft by night
Breathe from aerial lyres the liquid notes
And high-toned melody of sacred song.
Such charm is yet in your primæval haunts
By that still gloom, in which the enraptur'd mind
Contemplates the stupendous vault of heav'n,
And feels the limitary thought expand
With thousand vast conceptions, undefined,
And stretching far amid the maze of worlds
Beyond the azure deep. At the calm hour
Of silent midnight, when the tranquil moon
Glides slowly o'er the spangled brow of heav'n,
Some sacred charm of melancholy strains
Steals soft (or seems to steal) upon the breeze,
Quiring from each bright orb to fancy's ear.
Oft have I listen'd to the sighing gale,
That heaves the rustling boughs, and, gazing round
With pleasing horror on the peaceful gloom,
Thought, that, while nature slept in still repose,
Some viewless spirit hover'd on the breeze

Revisiting the scenes of former joy,
To muse on one, it loved; and breathe around
O'er each lone vale, green bank, or mossy stream,
The sweet enchantment of immortal sounds.
Nor seldom, when the heart is sad, the soul
To such illusions wild its spirit lends.
For sorrow is to harmony allied
By some mysterious tie: the saddest bird
Sings sweetest, and its soul-delighting plaint
Bears melody, which not the blithesome lark
Caroling can ever reach; the maid forlorn,
Love-crazed, and blighted in the bud of youth,
Will lay her by the secret gurgling stream,
That slowly winds beneath some spreading shade,
Where mournful fancies dwell, and all the day
Warble the sorrowfullest ditties sweet;
Nor would she change her melancholy lay,
And pillow strew'd with many a mystic flow'r,
For pomp, or wealth, or pleasure's joyous dream.
The mournful music of her sorrow spreads

A strange infectious charm: the very winds,
That kiss her lovely form, more softly blow;
And, as they curl around her virgin limbs,
Waving with innocent breath her tresses loose,
Seem fearful, lest their fond and sportive touch
Should scare her gentle grief. For Zephyrs have
Their modulations mild, which sweetly lull
The melancholy soul: there's not a breeze,
That fans the purple year, and spreads around
Thousand soft odors from its gentle breath,
But leaves some sad remembrance, as it goes,
Some painful memory of past delights,
Pleasing, tho' painful. To the feeling heart
All nature breathes harmonious. Are there not
In the sweet gales, that wake the dewy morn,
In the soft night-breeze, and the murmuring stream,
Ay even in the thunderous hurricane,
Sounds exquisite, which touch some consonant nerve,
And thrill the ear? There is a mystery
In every form, in every varied sound:

For art doth but arrest the fleeting shapes
And combinations of sweet harmony;
And they, who read aright fair nature's book,
Will find a charm in every desert spot
To solace life. O sacred harmony,
Sweet gift of heaven to soothe the troubled soul,
And sweeter still to sing the giver's praise;
In every age by every worship call'd,
Christian, or Heathen, to adorn the pomp
Of holy festival! And fitly so
His pagan priests their mystic anthems raise
In Eastern climes to his immortal name,
Mightiest, and first, and best, by all adored,
Gaudma, or Codom and Somona call'd,
Or Foe, or Boodh, one great eternal God;
Who, when the world was made, one giant foot
On stony * Meeaday, on Ceylon one,
Firm fixed, did bestride the peopled earth,
Viewing his fair creation. To such strains
Holiest, enchanted nature seems to bend

* See Symes's Embassy to Ava.

In solemn acquiescence; all, that breathes,
That moves, that lives, and feels the genial sun,
Is held by witchery of sacred song
Listening its maker's praise; sweet tribute paid
To the Omnipotent, and then best paid,
When virtuous sorrow holds each meaner thought
In calm subjection. Such persuasion is
E'en in idolatrous strains; raised by the voice
Of zealous priests to the creative Pow'r,
Whose word hath hung the infinite of heav'n
With countless worlds and vast; whose anger sends
Destruction forth amongst his guilty sons,
Tempest, and war, and famine's blighting scath,
And wither'd shapes of pestilential death
In yellow autumn, when the hollow winds
Howl sickly, loaded with the wrath of heav'n.

THE

PEACE OF AMIENS.

After the manner of "The flow'rs of the forest."
See MINST. SCOT. BORD. *v.* 2.

1802.

Our arms have thunder'd,
And Europe has wonder'd
At trophies of valor by Britain display'd;
But April expiring
Has heard the guns firing,
To sound the sad fall of her glory and trade.

The pow'r of France growing,
All thrones to her bowing,
Our wealth to republican losels a prey,
Our trophies all faded,
Though proudly paraded,
The tackle, which held us, is all cut away.

With flags gaily flying,
Her big canvass plying,
O'er the dark lap of ocean the stout vessel sail'd;
With sound timbers swimming,
Her course safely trimming,
Tho' long by the tempest and billows assail'd.

But her pilot all fearful,
With eyes sad and tearful,
Has struck on the shallows avoiding the tide;
And the waters quick rising,
Her glories despising,
Will loose all her timbers, and break o'er her side.

I've heard the loud thunder,
Which made Europe wonder,
When our navy rode free o'er the boisterous seas;
I've heard the war sounding,
The wide world confounding,
But sweeter, than treacherous carol of peace.

Each ancient alliance
With feeble compliance
Abandon'd a prey to a renegade's sway,
The pow'r of France growing,
All thrones to her bowing,
The tackle, which held us, is all cut away.

THE

RUINS OF ROME;

BEING THE

FIRST PART OF AN ODE BY GUIDI.

From the Italian.

1804.

1.

O BLESS'D Arcadia*, learning's hallow'd fane!
Where, shelter'd from the storms of dubious fate,
On Rome's proud hills we find a safe retreat;
And, from this tranquil solitary seat,
The glorious form behold
Of that illustrious city old.
Lo, where, beneath the scourge of years,
In firm undaunted state
Her martial head she boldly rears;
Her wonderous piles, which yet unharm'd remain,

* L'Academia degli Arcadi, a society at Rome, of which Guidi was admitted a member in 1691.

Still rise with proud disdain;
And warm beneath the ashes of her fame
Still glows the vigor of the Latin name.

2.

Proud and unconquerable still is Rome,
Though stretch'd on earth her limbs gigantic lie.
The fell barbarian war
Pour'd from the fatal northern star,
And the destructive shock
Of angry Time, she seems to mock;
All-glorious are the ruins of her land,
And her great monuments eternal stand.
And we, upon the honor'd plain,
Where flows old Tiber's matchless stream,
Behold his swollen waters rolling by
With conscious pride of ruling still supreme
O'er all the mighty billows of the main.

3.

There stood the stately bridge,
Where groan'd the wheels of the triumphal car

Laden with spoils of Asiatic war!
There hung the standards, once in battle borne,
And beaks from hostile vessels torn!
Mark the superb Tarpeian rock,
Whose hardy bosom nurs'd the sons of fame;
Where many a chained king,
To glut with servile shame
Imperial Rome's almighty will
From Parthia captive or from Egypt led,
Has heard the edict fulmine o'er his head!

4.

Behold the formidable shade
Of that stupendous pile, by Titus rear'd!
How lofty, how immensely grand,
Its venerable ruins stand!
When first the wonderous walls appear'd,
The wrathful hands of Time,
Who saw the monsterous mass his threats oppose,
From many a distant clime
To strike the fatal blows

Barbarian steel and Gothic fury led.
Yet see, where still it rears its awful head!
The huge remains, which seem to scorn their foes,
Resentful yet of those injurious bands,
Stand proudly menacing the hostile lands.

5.

There towers the hill from great Quirinus named;
Where thoughtful sate those proud Patricians old,
And in their mighty souls ambitious framed
Sad chains and servile woes
To tame their stubborn foes,
The hardy Dacian and the Briton bold.
Now is the hallow'd land
Ruled by a milder hand;
Celestial cares unruffled there abide,
And golden laws and dovelike peace reside.

SONETTO.

" Hermosura infeliz, siempre nacida
Para mortal estrago de la vida."
LA RAQUEL.

O DUCI angeliche, amorose, e belle,
Da che sul delicato e dolce viso
Lampeggia placido e soave il riso,
Duci siete d'amor, beate stelle!
Oimè bellezze dolci sì, ma felle!
Oimè 'l bel sguardo, che ha ogni cor conquiso!
Le mille grazie care in van ravviso,
Vaghe sempre, mutabili, e novelle!
Perfide duci! lusinghiere scorte!
Ovunque voi lanciate i chiari lampi,
Par che baleni amor, ed arda gioia:
Ma dietro siede infausta e dura sorte;
Quanto più avvien che il bel splendor avvampi,
Tanto ci seguirà più grave noja.

AD

AMICUM,

IN

NORVEGIAM PROFECTURUS.

" Quæ causa remotas
Quærendi sedeis, frigidaque arva, viris?
Libertas, nequidquam alibi quæsita: sub Arcto
Hospitibus tandem tuta reperta novis."
Laurentius Norrmannus ap. Rudbeck. in Lap. illust.

1802.

O EGO siquando Americæ ferar hospes ad oras,
Quà Canadæ juxta nemora atque ignota locorum
Volvitur immani fluviorum maximus alvêo;
Aut, Australasiæ fines atque arva Demani
Omine collustrans dextro, prope litus amœnum
Longinqui maris in gremio nova mœnia condam!
Ipsum ultra oceanum magnoque sonantia fluctu
Litora Sumatræ penetrare et saxa Timori
Mens avet. O quondam nostros ea terra nepotes
Libertate suâ excipiat, longinqua Selandi
Quæ juga prospiciens Australi tunditur undâ!

Hîc olim (si fata sinant, aut anxia mentis
Ausa meæ fatum superent) veneranda futuri
Ad vada* Dalripylæ regni fundamina ponam.
Sint modò, qui mecum rudis ad cunabula vitæ
Ire velint, vastosque oculis lustrare recessus,
Quo nunc perculsus studio inter devia rupum
Scandiæ ad horribilis nemorosas deferar Alpes.
O juga pinifera, et fractis reboantia saxis
Flumina, quàm vellem vestri requiescere longùm
Ruris in hospitio, gelida inter lustra ferarum!
Libera vos auditis enim, neque sævus honores
Sprevit adhuc vestros pede Gallicus induperator;
Qui nunc per magnas Anglorum turpiter urbes
Percellit populum, et major de pace triumphat.
O patria, o animo semper carissima nostro,
Si tibi mens eadem, et virtus antiqua maneret,
Nulla tibi me subriperent discrimina fati;
Sed potiùs te suspicerem, potiúsque cadenti
Hærerem, et penitus nullo divellerer ævo!
Quòd si dura pati fatum est, perdique Britannûm

* Dalrymple river in Van Dieman's land.

Res statuit Pater omnipotens, saltem inde sinebat
Magnâ mente animisque tamen procumbere victos.
Occubuisse parum est, socii! mallem omnia raptet,
Omnia victor agat ferrêo pede barbarus hostis,
Quàm Britonum, tot post securæ secula laudis,
Proculcari animos turpique senescere somno.
O Thamesine pater fluviorum, et nobilis Humber,
Et virgo Sabrina Locrini regia proles,
Tamaraque, et liquido delabens Usa fluento,
Nonne foret satius regna ultra Sauromatarum
Ircutscam lavere indigetes, gelidæque Tobolscæ
Æternâ nive constringi, quàm talia tristes
Vidisse, et penitus raptum flevisse decorem,
Olim armis quæsitum, armis et sanguine vestrûm?
Sed (quoniam, necdum confecto corpore regni,
In medio victrix languet certamine virtus,
Et, quibus imperium pelagi magnique patebant
Ditia regna maris custodi turbida fluctu,
Nunc patimur segnes positisque labascimus armis)
Ponemus patrios alio sub sole penates.
Care comes, qui mecum in primo limine vitæ

Dulcia Pierii libâsti pocula fontis,
Iisdem odiis, uno patriæ commotus amore,
Te socium studeo mihi quondam in sede Demani;
Cui conclusa mari natalibus æstuat arvis
Magna gemens anima, et luctu languescit inermi.
Nam neque, quem patriæ quondam victricis imago
Juvit, et antiquo regum sub sanguine virtus,
Te servile jugum prostrato admittere collo
Ipsius ante pedes reor aut sub consule segnem
Malle pati, quàm regna ultra spumantia ponti
Virtutemque rudem proavorum et jura fovere
Libera. Non ego, si centum mihi tecta paterent
Aurea, magnificis circùm lucentia gazis,
Tale quid appeterem, mentemque inducere possem,
Ut paterer raptâ de libertate triumphum;
Sed potiùs silvarum umbras et sola ferarum
Antra colens, mœstam solarer carmine mentem,
Ad vada Dalripylæ, vel litora rauca Selandi,
Incultasque rudi proscindens vomere glebas
Messe novâ flavisque docerem fulgere culmis.

FROM

OSSIAN'S BERRATHON.

1801.

Ἀκλειεῖς τιθηᾶσιν, ὅσοι ποτε φάσκον ἄριστοι
Ἔμμεναι, ἐδ' ἐδύναντο μέλαιναν κῆρ' ὑπαλύξαι.
Ἀνθρώπων δὴ φῦλα κυλίνδεται ἄλλα μετ' ἄλλα·
Ὥσπερ ἐν αἰγιαλῷ κλύζοντος κύματα πόντου,
Ὥσπερ δάσκια φύλλα Μορυσίνης βαθυδένδρου
Τηλεθάει· ἄνεμος δὲ τὰ μὲν φέρει, ἄλλα δὲ θηλεῖ·
Ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενίη ἀλλάσσεται. Ἀρά γε πότμου
Ἡ κεφαλὴ ἀπάμυνεν ἐὺ κράτος Ὀσκαρίοιο,
Ἡ χάρις ἀμβροσίη Ῥυνῶος κῆρ' ἀλέεινεν;
Κωμαλίδης αὐτὸς τέθνηκεν, φέρτατος ἀνδρῶν,
Χρυσέον τ' ἐκλέλαθεν πατερῶν δόμον· ἐδὲ γέραιος
Μοῖραν ἀοιδοπόλος ὑπαλύξομαι, ὡς ἀπόλοντο
Ἥρωες· τὸ δ' ἐμὸν κλέος ἔσσεται, ἠΰτε φῆγος
Εἶνι Μορυσίνῃ ταυφύλλῳ, ἥτερ ἀΐλλης
Ἀντήρυδε κόμας, ἀνέμοιό τε ἶφι ἀνάσσει.

FROM

GESNER.

By W. FRERE, Esq.

Εἰς Ἔρωτα.

1797.

Αἰ, αἰ, Ἔρως, φίλε δαῖμον, ἅμ' εἴαρος ἅματι πρώτῳ
Τοί ποκα βῶμον ἔδειμα, μύχῳ κάπω θυόεντος·
Καὶ περὶ μὲν μύρτως, περὶ δ' αἱμασίαν ῥοδοέσσαν
Ἔσπειρ'. Ἦρ' ἤ τοι, ὅσσ' ἄματα λευκὰ δέδορκεν,
Τοὶ δροσερὸς αἰεὶ ςέφανος βώμῳ ἐνὶ μέσσῳ
Χερσὶν ἐμαῖς κεῖται πεπονημένος, ἁγνὸν ἄγαλμα;
Μαψιδίως· ἠδὴ κρατεροὶ χείμωνος ἀῆται
Δένδρων τε θάμνων τε διεσκέδασαν βαθὺ φύλλον,
Σκληρὰ δ' ἐςὶ κόρα, ὡς εἴαρος ἅματι πρώτῳ.

THE END.

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